BS1615
.C781

LIBRARY OF PRINCETON
JUN 23 1952
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
BS1615
.C781

A STUDY OF THE PROPHET MICAH

LIBRARY OF PRINCETON
JUN 23 1952
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A STUDY OF THE PROPHET MICAH

"Power by the Spirit"

by

B. A. Copass, A.M., D.D. and E. L. Carlson, A.M.,Th.M.

BAKER BOOK HOUSE
Grand Rapids 6, Michigan
1950

Copyright, 1950, by
BAKER BOOK HOUSE

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the publisher, except brief quotations used in connection with reviews in a magazine or newspaper.

Printed in the United States of America

To our friend

Eugene Coke Routh

PREFACE

Some years ago we worked out for use in our advanced classes at the Southwestern Baptist Seminary a series of STUDIES IN HEBREW EXEGESIS AND SYNTAX. *Among these was a detailed linguistic analysis of Micah; on it we have built the following more comprehensive study. We hope that this new examination will be of use to many students of the Old Testament, especially to those who want Micah's plain exposition of the reasonable, simple requirements God makes unchangingly of man: that man shall do justly, love kindness, and walk humbly before his Maker.*

*B. A. Copass**
E. L. Carlson

Seminary Hill, 1949

* *Subsequent to the preparation of the manuscript for this book, Dr. Copass passed to his eternal reward. We are happy that this book may be added to the media by which his influence is being extended into the future.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface 7

Chapter I. Behind the Prophet Micah: A Study of Prophecy 13

Chapter II. Behind the Prophecy of Micah: A Study of History, Laws, Conditions . 43

Chapter III. Micah the Morashtite and His Prophecy 79

Chapter IV. Micah's Prophecy: Section I, Chapters I and II 95

Chapter V. Micah's Prophecy: Section II, Chapters III, IV, V 111

Chapter VI. Micah's Prophecy: Section III, Chapters VI and VII 133

Appendix A. The Moabite Stone 151

Appendix B. Nehushtan, the Serpent 155

Appendix C. Outlines of the Prophecy of Micah ...161

Bibliography 165

Index 167

Note to the Reader

Use your foot-notes and appendices. They have been carefully prepared to help you appreciate and understand Micah's prophecy, and to suggest to you the possibilities of further investigation and study.

I

BEHIND THE PROPHET MICAH

"The word of Jehovah that came to Micah the Morashtite . . . which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem." (1:1)

Micah the Morashtite of Judah in the late eighth century before Christ called himself a prophet of Jehovah, and in the preceding passage set out his credentials. The statement says, literally, that the word of Jehovah, a message of divine authority, was divinely directed through mental and spiritual vision to Micah. That is, he understood the context and the spiritual urgency of the message he was to deliver concerning (upon) the capital cities of the Israelite nations. Before the study of his vivid messages is undertaken, however, some help in appreciating them may be gained by a curtailed survey of what lay behind Micah in the field of prophecy; of just what, then and to this day, sets the prophets of Israel apart from other men.

SEERS AMONG PRIMITIVE PEOPLES

In every primitive religion are people whose function it is to commune on behalf of the group with the mysterious. These persons are called by various names, wise men, oracles, seers, gazers, men of God, medicine

men, prophets. Their methods of communication hinge, it seems, on their ability to sublimate their personalities, and to effect this sublimation they use differing means. One of these is a certain mental clarification, or excitement or ecstasy, induced by such discipline as fasting, singing, instrumental music, or determined mental concentration. The result achieved, if achieved, is a dream, a vision, or a trance. The dream may come during sleep, or it may come as a conscious revelation. The person to whom it is granted may retain awareness but will be raised to a spiritual plane where his receptivity of the transcendental is possible. The second means, cruder, is to seek truth by means of signs, omens, or the casting of lots.

Ordinarily seers among primitive peoples were, and are, consulted about problems of every day life: where to find lost property, whether a woman is faithful, when to go to war, whether to go to war, who should lead the army, when to plant the food crops, whether an illness may be fatal. Seers who could supply worthy answers to such vital questions were highly regarded, and they were paid for their services. They "divined" to earn their livelihood, to make money. Citizens paid for their information; rulers, for their advice; and they as a class waited for the people to approach them for help. They seem to have given nothing to an individual or a group until so approached and rewarded.

The best example of this class is Balaam, whose part in the history of the Israelites was dramatic and memorable. He came into their history, unknown to them, as they approached Moab on their journey to Canaan, while

Moses was still their leader. He was evidently an internationally known and respected seer; he called himself a "gazer."[1] He was not an Israelite, but lived on the Euphrates River at Pethor in Mesopotamia;[2] and he knew Jehovah. From the Biblical account[3] it is clear that the Jehovah Moses knew and worked under was as accessible and as powerful to Balaam the Gentile as to Moses of the tribe of Levi. At any rate, Balak, King of Moab, fearful for his country as Israel advanced, sent elders from Moab and Midian, "with the rewards of divination in their hand" on the long, difficult journey to seek Balaam and to ask him to come to Moab to curse Israel. So great was Balaam's respect for Jehovah that before he would accept the commission he asked permission of Jehovah, and the answer was succinct, ". . . thou shalt not curse the people; for they are blessed." In great anxiety Balak later sent a second delegation composed both of more men and of "more honorable" men; and this time Jehovah came to Balaam "in the night" giving him permission to go to Moab, but bidding him to speak only the word Jehovah would there give him.

So Balaam went. He must have even then considered some way by which he might earn Moab's money, for an angel of Jehovah met him as he journeyed, "because thy way is perverse before me," to remind him vividly that he should "speak only the word that I shall speak unto

---

[1]Philo, *Life of Moses,* calls him "a great magician"; Josephus, *History of the Jews,* accounts his disposition incapable of resisting temptation.

[2]Deut. 23:4.

[3]Num. 22-24 and 31:8, 16.

thee." After he had met Balak, however, he made three attempts to persuade Jehovah: from heights; building three separate sets of seven altars and making sacrifices thereon, bullocks and rams; using "enchantments." Then, failing, he forsook the enchantments, went toward the wilderness, saw Israel dwelling in their tents by tribes, and blessed the nation with the words, "Blessed be everyone that blesseth thee," prophesying in detail of Israel's inevitable and profound glory. Then he went home. It is noticeable here that Balaam used both visions and signs, and that he was unable to speak his own thoughts, or after his own will; he could speak only as Jehovah permitted him, and only what Jehovah revealed to him.

He must later, however, have forgotten the awesomeness of his experience and have remembered the "rewards of Balak," for he came again to Moab; and he must, for a bribe, have had some part in seducing Israel to the worship of Moloch at Baal-peor, after the nation had come into contact with Moab. This is one of the most frequently remembered historical incidents in the Bible. Moses in his old age reminded Israel of it;[4] Joshua summed it up.[5] Hosea knew that some of God's chosen people journeying to the land he was to give them had "consecrated themselves unto the shameful thing" at Baal-peor;[6] Micah referred to the whole story.[7]

---

[4]Deut. 4:3-4.

[5]Josh. 24:9-10.

[6]Hos. 9:10.

[7]Mic. 6:5. See in the New Testament: Jude 11, "the error of Balaam for hire"; 2 Peter 2:15-16, "the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the hire of wrong doing"; Rev. 2:14, "Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel."

So it was that a man of mysterious powers, not an Israelite, but acquainted with Jehovah and cognizant of the divine will, turned his powers for hire to eventual and wanton evil, trying since he could not curse to circumvent. He was killed with an Israelite sword as he fought with Midian against the people of his blessing.

It may be well to notice here that in the Bible there is no attempt to deny that among all nations lived men with powers such as Balaam's. Moses himself, meeting Pharaoh's magicians, did not decry their magical abilities; what he did was to demonstrate that those abilities were meager before the power of Jehovah. Many years later Elijah made a similar demonstration to the priests of Melkart, the Baal of Tyre and of Ahab. Sometimes in the national life of Israel such demonstrations seemed necessary, and wise.[8] The God of Israel was known to many, as to Balaam, as a mighty God; his blessing was a real blessing; his curse was fearsome.

But before Israel was established as a nation, Jehovah began to show the people that transcendental powers used lightly, used in any way that was merely curious or unwholesome or that would come between a person and God, were evilly used. There is this early warning against the false prophet,[9] so applicable to Balaam that one wonders if Jehovah held him in mind.

> If there arise in the midst of thee a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and he give thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder come to pass, . . . saying, Let us go after other gods, . . . and let us

[8]For a much later instance, Daniel.
[9]Deut. 13:1-5.

> serve them; thou shalt not hearken . . . for Jehovah your God proveth you . . . . And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; . . .

Earlier God had specified to Israel, "Thou shalt not suffer a sorceress to live";[10] later Israel is categorically warned against certain abominations among the nations with whom she will come in contact after Canaan shall be possessed:[11]

> There shall not be found with thee anyone that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire,
> One that useth divination,
> one that practiseth augury,
> or an enchanter, or a sorcerer,
> or a charmer,
> or a consulter with a familiar spirit;
> or a wizard,
> or a necromancer.
>
> For whosoever doeth these things is an *abomination to Jehovah.*

Among the saddest details in all the sad story of Saul is that, even after he had himself prophesied,[12] even though one of his royal acts had been to send necromancers and wizards out of the land,[13] in his final desperation, in his urge to touch again the authority of Jehovah through Samuel, he forgot Jehovah's instructions as he had forgotten the way he had once known to Jehovah, and knew no other way to comfort except through the witch of Endor.

---

[10]Ex. 22:18.
[11]Deut. 18:10-12.
[12]1 Sam. 10:11; 11:6; 19:23-24.
[13]1 Sam. 28:3 ff.

Of course Israel was never free of some people who had mysterious powers and used them wantonly; this willful seeking after the transcendental became one of Israel's memorable sins, along with idolatry. This was one of the evils that stood between the nation and Jehovah, and of which she must be cleansed. Micah warned, in his day, "And it shall come to pass in that day, saith Jehovah that . . . I will cast off witchcrafts out of thy hand; and thou shalt have no more soothsayers."[14]

It is clear, however, from the story of Balaam and from the strictures against false prophets and their ilk, that in Israel and her neighbors were men of mysterious abilities, trusted by the people to acquaint them with the will of their deities, and that Jehovah sometimes made use of such men. In any nation, much depended on the character of the seer, for every seer had a moral opportunity. If the men were honest and humble, through them Jehovah could teach a positive differentiation of good from evil, a moral, intellectual, and spiritual righteousness. That he did use some of them is so recorded,[15] "Yet Jehovah testified unto Israel and unto Judah, by every prophet and every seer." Many of these served worthily. Notice that in Israel even Samuel was, in part, a professional "seer" and that Gad, Nathan, Micaiah, among others, some of them called simply "a man of God" or "a seer," played high and moral parts in the history of Israel.

---

[14]Micah 5:10-12. Compare Isa. 8:19.
[15]2 Kings 17:12.

PROPHECY AMONG THE ISRAELITES

Among the Israelites the machinery of prophecy seems not to have been very different from that of other nations. Moses, as has been seen, used magic against magic; Samuel called on Jehovah for a sign, before the people, of thunder and rain out of season;[16] Gideon in painful indecision asked and received a sign;[17] David knew that he should go to battle when the "sound of marching was in the tops of the mulberry trees";[18] Jehovah during Micah's lifetime offered a sign to King Ahaz, who refused it, and gave one to King Hezekiah, who welcomed it.[19] Saul was chosen king by the casting of lots to determine God's will;[20] Joshua cast lots to find the "devoted" person among the tribes, just as centuries later heathen mariners singled out Jonah as the cause of their disaster;[21] Jonathan's disobedience was determined by lot.[22] The most prevalent method of touching the will of the Infinite was, however, that of the ecstatic trance or dream. Jehovah often used dreams for revelations: Jacob had his dream; Joseph, his. Jehovah called Samuel at night from his sleep; Balaam's first communications from Jehovah came to him at night. Joseph, and centuries later Daniel, could interpret dreams other men had. This sort of revelation men desired.

---

[16] 1 Sam. 12:16-18.
[17] Judg. 6:36 ff.
[18] 2 Sam. 5:24.
[19] Isa. 7:11-12 and 38:7-8.
[20] 1 Sam. 10:20-22.
[21] Josh. 7:16-18 and Jonah 1:7.
[22] 1 Sam. 14:41-43.

It is remembered that in Samuel's day groups of men, evidently the germ of the later Schools of the Prophets, induced the ecstatic state by bodily activity, by dancing and music;[23] their ecstasy came to them in their conscious state.[24] This is the kind of prophesying in which Saul partook, and this mood is the kind David knew when he danced before the ark.[25] The great Isaiah tells of invoking a similar but intellectually heightened mood when he was alone;[26] and his prophetic "Burdens" seem in great part visions that he achieved while so sublimated: "The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amos did see," "the burden of the Valley of Vision." Hosea[27] spoke of "multiplied visions" granted to the prophets by Jehovah. Amos asserted, "Thus the word God showed me." Joel's exalted picture of the kingdom to come "afterward" is of a people so receptive to Jehovah that the gift of prophecy shall belong to "all flesh": ". . . Your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days shall I pour out my Spirit."[28] Conversely, Micah, warning the prophets of Judah against Balaam's sin of prostituting prophecy to bribery, against

---

[23]Elisha once called for music before he could prophesy. 2 Kings 3:15.

[24]The young Son of the Prophets who anointed Jehu was called by his soldiers, apparently in recognition of his profession, "this mad fellow." 2 Kings 9:11.

[25]2 Sam. 6:16-21.

[26] Isa. 21.

[27]Hos. 12:10.

[28]Joel 2:28-29.

giving the people anything short of God's word, said to them, "Therefore it shall be night unto you, and ye shall have no vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine."[29]

It seems that a prophet while in the ecstatic mood retained consciousness, remained rational but was lifted to spiritual clarity in which he met Jehovah's will and his character. So, his speaking was of God's words for God. This, it is remembered, was the case with Balaam. This is why prophetic introductory formulae ran: "Thus saith Jehovah," "I was in the Spirit and heard," "The Spirit of the Lord came upon me," and Micah's challenging, "Hear ye now what Jehovah saith."[30] In all the utterances of the great prophets, and in those of some nameless whose work has been preserved, are instances of Jehovah's breaking through the prophet's personality and speaking his message himself. Hosea, who seems to have identified himself most closely with the divine character, is marked by many such utterances. So is Isaiah. From magic and the casting of lots to the remarkable spiritual penetration of the Prophets of Micah's period is a long way; and men had been able to traverse it only because through moral intelligence and spiritual honesty they had worked under God's guidance.

Unworthy Prophets

Into such a profession—honored, influential, mysterious—inevitably came some unworthy men. Like Balaam, they were prophets because the "hire," "the bribes," in-

[29]Micah 3:6.
[30]Micah 6:1.

cidental to the profession were immediate; their interest lay, as Micah said, in what they could "bite with their teeth." Some of them may have been imposters, simulating the ecstasy, formulating the utterances; some were complacent and comfortably blind in their positions. Only one prophet in all of Israel during Ahab's late reign had vision that sufficed to truth.[31]

It is possible that contact with heathen prophets attendant on the Baal-worship shrines in Judah and Israel vitiated the ability of some prophets who claimed Jehovah as their god. There must have been many such contacts. Ahab and Jezebel once maintained eight hundred fifty prophets of Melkart, the Baal of Tyre, and of Asherah, his female counterpart;[32] and during Micah's life Ahaz of Judah must have sponsored others. Some were, perhaps, remaining among the Canaanites who had never left the land, or among the Israelites who had dispossessed them, men growing up in the Baal worship, native to it in Canaan. Such, perhaps, were the four hundred Ahab summoned before the battle of Ramoth-Gilead, since after Elijah's destruction of the eight hundred fifty on Carmel even such rulers as Ahab and Jezebel would hardly have dared to import more. It was Israel's tragedy that importation was unnecessary. These were preferred, protected men. A weakly sincere prophet, claiming Jehovah but cognizant of the material status of his heathen counterpart, could unconsciously adapt his moral attitude to theirs.

---

[31] 1 Kings 22:5-40.

[32] 1 Kings 18:19.

The great menace to the people was that they in great part depended on the prophets to learn of Jehovah's will and his tendencies; and the prophets, avid to please the people, in vicious circle fashion misled them. So it seems that in their servile eagerness to please, to be sought, to be maintained, they were shut off from truth. As early as the time of Moses, Jehovah was concerned lest Israel confuse the unworthy with the trustworthy prophet, and gave the nation a test to apply to any man who spoke to them in his name;[33] but in spite of Jehovah's care, in spite of the admirable examples of prophethood that Israel nationally esteemed—Moses, Joshua, Samuel—evidence from prophetic writings of the period during which Micah worked indicates that in Israel were far more venal prophets than good ones. Perhaps the priest Amaziah of Beth-el was only judging Amos by the bulk of Israelite prophets when he bade him, "thou seer, go flee thou away into the land of Judah, and *there eat bread.*" The scornful reply shows how Amos considered the profession; he was not of it: "I was no prophet neither was I a prophet's son."[34] Hosea mourned that the prophets and the people stumbled in the night,[35] both unable to see. Isaiah warned, ". . . these are shepherds that cannot understand; they have all turned to their own way, each one to his gain."[36] Micah spoke sternly twice on the subject of unworthy prophets. The first instance sets out the reciprocal harm wrought between such prophets and a venal people:

---

[33]Deut. 18:15-20.

[34]A student in a School of Prophets. Amos 7:12-15.

[35]Hos. 4:5.

[36]Isa. 58:11. See also Isa. 9:15-16.

> If a man walking in a spirit of falsehood do lie, saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink;[37] he shall even be the prophet of this people. (2:11)

The second is a forthright warning to the prophets themselves, some of them no doubt comfortably complacent, waiting for the people to bring them their "hire", ostensibly relying on Jehovah, and ready to discredit any who might menace their livelihood by criticism or disagreement:

> Thus saith Jehovah concerning the prophets that make my people to err; that bite with their teeth and cry, Peace;[38] (and whoso putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him):
>
> *Therefore* it shall be night to you, that ye shall have no vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down upon the prophets, and the day shall be black over them.
>
> And the seers shall be put to shame, and the diviners confounded; yea, they shall all cover their lips; for there is no answer of God. (3:5-7).

Israel's Prophetic Tradition

Look now briefly at the prophetic tradition that Israel and Judah knew. The first of the good prophets was Enoch, "the seventh from Adam," who during his life "walked with God," and who gave his people warning of "judgment to convict all that are ungodly . . . of their works of ungodliness . . . and of all the hard things

---

[37]The inference is that the ecstasy was so induced.

[38]Micah is aware of the threat of invasion, but the subject was not popular among the people.

which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."[39] This is clear prophecy: judgment for sin. Between Enoch and Samuel, Israel produced great prophets: Noah who, like Enoch, warned his generation of destruction because of their evil lives, and who was witness to the destruction; Abraham, whom Jehovah promised that through him all the nations of the earth should be blessed; Jacob, who struggled with God and became God's servant Israel; the incomparable Moses, who, alone, talked with God as a friend, knew his form, taught Israel that Jehovah, and Jehovah alone was God; Samuel, whom Jehovah called to prophecy while he was young, who "saw" for hire, who counseled and anointed kings.

Worth noting is the fact that all of these great prophets served the people with a two-fold ministry. They pointed the nation to moral understanding and living, and they had a powerful hand in the nation's political life. The two phases were not separate: moral rightness was a part of good government; this was the gist of all that Moses and Samuel taught the people. The ramifications ran so: Jehovah was God; he demanded exclusive worship *because* he alone was holy; if man rendered him sincere, attentive, spiritual worship, man's attitude to his fellows, his dealings with them, would be righteous. Government would, then, be for the purpose of serving and protecting righteous people. It was right to war with such foreign nations as intruded into the progress or the maintenance of the holy nation, because such war was war against the powers of evil. Jehovah would lead in a

---

[39]Gen. 5:21-24 and Jude 14-15.

just war, would bring victory to an army fighting righteously for righteousness.[40]

Jehovah, the teaching continued, had made a people of Israel when they might have remained slaves in Egypt, promised them a rich and desirable country when they might have had no country, *for his own glory.* Israel, descended from Abraham and Jacob, bore within it the seeds of spiritual growth and understanding.[41] Moses, and after him Joshua, tried to teach Israel this, to hold the nation ever mindful for the *reason* for its being:

> And he said, Behold I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been wrought in all the earth . . . ; and *all the people among which thou art shall see the work of Jehovah; for it is a terrible thing that I do with thee.*[42]

In Samuel's Day

During Samuel's time the bands of prophets and the group prophesying already mentioned in this study, flourished. What influence they had on the minds and the lives of Israel is hard to know, but it must not have been negligible. They came at the time when the nation was establishing itself against outside enemies; they were certainly a part of the national insistence on the nation's preferred position, and therefore on Jehovah. They were recognized as legitimate by Samuel, and they seem free from ritual or form. From such groups, no

---

[40]Deborah's song, Judg. 5, is illustrative. Notice especially the last lines. See also David's Psalm 18:34-35.

[41]Deut. 9:5 ff; 26:5-9.

[42]Ex. 34:10. Compare 2 Sam. 7:23-24.

doubt, as has been seen previously, Elijah later drew his famed "sons of the prophets." Samuel was himself a devoted and mighty prophet, determined to keep Israel, King and people, obedient before Jehovah. "Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of Jehovah?" he asked Saul. "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim."[43] This prophet also saw to the building and completion of Jehovah's political and military directives. As this study has already mentioned, he anointed Saul, deposed Saul, anointed David; he slew Agag of Amalek because against Jehovah's command Saul had spared him.

From Samuel to Elijah

Between Samuel and Elijah no prophet dominated Israel as these two, each in his turn; but during this period were many good prophets, individuals, courageous, clear-visioned. David himself achieved to high prophecy in some of his psalms, based on the glory of Israel and the divine promise to his line.[44] He was, as king, attended by other prophets, the unequivocal Nathan; Gad, David's "seer"; Zadok, a "seer" who took care of the ark that time David and his people fled the threat of Absalom. Ahijah prophesied to Solomon and to Jeroboam I before the son of Nebat became King of Israel. After he was so established, an old prophet of Judah, nameless, showed him dramatically his religious error. Hanani went to prison because he spoke to Asa of Judah concerning his

[43] 1 Sam. 15:22-23.

[44] As examples, Ps. 89:34-37; 118:19-24.

dereliction, and his son Jehu carried the divine message of death for sin to Baasha of Israel.[45]

The outstanding lesson these prophets gave Israel was clear: Kings stand with their people under one moral law. David could not take Uriah's wife and go scatheless; Asa must be mindful in war of the God of Hosts and in his life of Jehovah's "fiery law"; Baasha must suffer with the people he had led to sin as he "walked in the way of Jeroboam." Kings had no privilege to dally with right under God's law.

Elijah

The kings of Israel and Judah must have been hard to convince, however, because the next great prophet, Elijah, was to underscore this teaching in his third meeting with Ahab. Three times only did Elijah meet Ahab, and Ahab feared him even to the point of obedience to his command at the second meeting. This third encounter was, as were the others, at God's command. Ahab had desired Naboth's vineyard, his hereditary land; and the king could not under the law confiscate it for himself, but only by culpable connivance involving Naboth's death. Elijah's message to him ran in part, "Hast thou killed and also taken possession? . . . In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine."[46]

Elijah's great work, though, was to cast out of Israel

---

[45]For Nathan, 2 Sam. 7:2; 12:1; for Zodak, 2 Sam. 15:27; for Gad, 2 Sam. 24: 11; for Ahijah, 1 Kings 11: 1-29; for Hanani, 2 Chron. 16: 7-10; for Jehu, 1 Kings 16:1, 7, 12.

[46]1 Kings 21; 22:34-38.

the worship of Melkart, Baal of Tyre, and Asherah, brought to Israel by Ahab's queen, Jezebel of Sidon, and royally established in the land.[47] The royal couple had practically abolished even the debased form of Jehovah worship established by Jeroboam I. They had "cut off the prophets of Jehovah" except for a hundred Obadiah had saved and hidden, and except for Elijah. He was a Tishbite, from Naphtali, a "sojourner" in Gilead, from trans-Jordan. This "man of God" set himself squarely against the worship of heathen gods in Israel. The three year drouth he announced under Jehovah's direction at his first meeting with Ahab was broken only after the annihilation of the eight hundred fifty heathen priests, at the conclusion of a contest of sacrifice and fire between him and them—a contest between the might of Jehovah and the futility of Baal. Ahab seemed to think that Elijah was responsible for the drouth, just as he had accomplished the deaths. Before the prophet's ministry was ended, he dipped into the next generation. He reproved Ahab's son Ahaziah for asking an oracle concerning his health from Baal-zebub, god of Ekron,[48] foretelling his death; and he sent a letter to Jehoram (Joram) of Judah, who had married Ahab's daughter and who "walked in the way of Israel," predicting disaster and death. Thus, at his Lord's command, he anointed Elisha, like him from trans-Jordan, to be prophet in his stead;[49] and he

---

[47]For the ministry of Elijah see 1 Kings 17-19 and 21; 2 Kings 1-2; 2 Chron. 21:12.

[48]Baal-zebub means Lord of flies.

[49]Only Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha offer a prophetic succession. In each case the younger was chosen by Jehovah to carry on the work begun by the elder.

made Elisha responsible for the anointing of Hazael as King of Syria and Jehu as King of Israel. These three men were to carry on the work against the worship of the Baalim that Elijah had begun.

Elisha

Elisha seems to have taken a more active part in the public affairs of Israel than Elijah had. Early in his ministry he directed a war against Moab for an Israel-Judah-Edom combination; they stopped, in apparent shock, just short of complete victory when the King of Moab sacrificed his heir, his oldest son, a "burnt offering" on the wall, for the salvation of the city. At Jehovah's command Elisha went to Damascus to anoint Hazael King of Syria. Hazael was to play his part in the destruction of the house of Ahab, in the rocking of Israel's throne under the impact of his war on that nation. Elisha, realizing the jeopardy of the Kingdom, after the disastrous conflict with Hazael, sent a young son of the prophets in haste and secrecy to anoint Jehu, and to give him Jehovah's command of annihilation for the house of Ahab. Jehu was thorough. Ahab's son, King Joram, Jehu slew and buried in Naboth's field; Ahab's queen, Jezebel of the "whoredoms" and "witchcrafts,"[50] he trod to death under his horse's feet. Ahab's other seventy sons he had slain. He directed the deaths of Ahaziah of Judah and his brothers, whose mother was Ahab's daughter. Then he slew in the valley of Jezreel every one of Israel who had worshiped Baal, "all his worshipers and all his priests"; he wrecked the "house of Baal," broke and

[50] 2 Kings 9:22.

burned the pillars and "the pillars of Baal," and made the place a "draught house." The golden calves he left at Beth-el and at Dan, but probably if Elisha had bidden him he would have destroyed these too. Though Elisha's ministry seems more political than that of other prophets,[51] it must be remembered that the political was motivated by the moral. His ministry accomplished the destruction of the worship in Israel of the Sidonian Baal. The last of his life was spent in helping Israel in her war with Syria; "in those days Jehovah began to cut off from Israel: and Hazael smote them in all the borders." As the prophet died, old and honored, he blessed the arms, the bow and arrows, King Joash would use against Hazael, and Joash wept over him, "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof."

Joel

After the time of Joram, the son-in-law of Ahab and Jezebel, and just after the extended reign of his wife, Athaliah, during the minority of Joash and under the regency of the Priest Jehoiada,[52] the prophet Joel gave to Judah a beautifully balanced prophecy that went beyond punishment for sin to mercy for repentance. The southern Kingdom was at this time, under the leadership of the fearless and determined and patient Jehoiada, struggling to shake off the Baal worship that had secured such seductive hold under Joram and Athaliah. Joel's prophecy begins with a vivid prediction that judgment

---

[51]For Elisha's ministry see 2 Kings 2:15—13:21.

[52]John R. Sampey, *Syllables for Old Testament Study*, Broadman, Nashville, pp. 159-61.

for sin will affect Judah in her means of life: there will be an army of locusts, a dearth of crops, of trees, of domestic animals. This was horror for Judah; *but* if the people would truly repent, if their worship would turn from ritual to spirituality, they would find Jehovah merciful:

> . . . rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto Jehovah your God; for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in loving kindness. Joel 2:13.

Thereafter will come restoration of the land and the crops, and the outpouring of the Spirit of Jehovah on those who seek Him. Joel was an artful speaker, seemingly well trained, bringing his hearers to a receptive frame of mind and heart before he called them to heed the call of repentance and hear the promise of comfort. His message is a worthy herald of Hosea's.

Jonah

About the time of Amos, during the reign of Jeroboam II of Israel, a prophet of that country, Jonah the son of Amittai, who was also a prophet,[53] prophesied to his king that military victories would enable him to "restore the border of Israel from Hamath unto the sea of Arabah," and was later sent by Jehovah on a foreign mission to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, "an exceeding great city of three days' journey." He was to "preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee" . . . "for their wickedness is come up before me." Jonah did not want to call Nineveh to repentance. He hated Nineveh, the

[53] 2 Kings 14:25-27 and The Book of Jonah.

capital city, as he hated Assyria the nation, for her conquests and the menace her might was to Israel. He had learned, perhaps from Joel, perhaps from Jehovah's present graciousness to Israel, of Jehovah's mercy for repentance; and he hoped for Nineveh's destruction, not for her repentance and endurance. He did not want to share with Ninevah the profit of Jehovah's mercy. So he fled his mission, going in the opposite direction, by ship, among heathen sailors, who also knew of Jehovah's might and feared it; but at last, chastened and obedient, he came to Ninevah and proclaimed his warning.

Jonah's mission emphasized the respect with which the God of Israel was every where held, even from the time of Balaam to the heyday of Assyria.[54] Assyria was at this time on the way to becoming a world conqueror; she would scatter the inhabitants of Israel; but Jonah called out one sentence to them, and the people of Ninevah "believed God" so completely that they stopped in their conquering stride to bow before him, to heed him, and to repent of sin. From the king to the least man they repented, fasting for three days wearing sackcloth, sitting in ashes, crying mightily to Israel's God, promising, everyone, to turn "from his evil way" and from the violence in Jehovah's hands. Jehovah, recognizing the turning as sincere, was there, as Jonah had feared, merciful to Ninevah, and spared the city. So, Jonah's mission also emphasizes Jehovah's power in the earth, and of his mercy to all repenting men.

---

[54]See the respect of foreign nations for Jehovah and Judah during the reign of the good king Jehoshaphat. 2 Chron. 17:7-13.

It would remain for Hosea to explain to Israel that God's mercy stemmed from God's love. The experience of Jonah, however, seems a beginning on Jehovah's part to lead Israel to proclaim his character, as well as his power, to the heathen world. It is preparation for Isaiah's, "From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs: Glory to the righteous," for Micah's clarion call, "Hear ye peoples, all of you; hearken, O earth."

Micah and His Contemporaries

With Amos begins that remarkable period of Israelite prophecy in which Micah played his part. It is well, therefore, to look back over this early prophecy in an effort to see just what it had established. The fundamental fact was that of One God, Jehovah the God of Israel, and Jehovah holy. On this fact hinged: the worship of Jehovah as spiritual and pure; the idea of Israel as a holy nation, chosen to the glory of God, sustained, if sustained, only because it reflected his character; Jehovah's immutable, impartial moral law; inevitable punishment if the law were broken; and mercy for true repentance.

Beginning with Elisha, a certain difference in the personnel of the great prophets appears. They are no longer professionals, no longer "sons of the prophets," though some of them may have been connected with the Schools. Elisha was a prosperous farmer; he was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen when Elijah cast his mantle over his shoulders. Amos was a "herdsman and a dresser of sycomore trees"; Isaiah was a diplomat, King Hezekiah's wise, strong friend; what Hosea and Micah

did for a livelihood is not told, but their strictures on prophets as a class lead to the opinion that they could not in their sincerity have been strictly of the profession. At any rate, these men had in common this trait: they were constrained by the power of the Spirit of Jehovah to leave their settled lives and carry to the people of Israel a message of sin, warning, punishment, and salvation. These are not the men who wait for the people to come to them, "rewards of divination" in their hands. These men preserve their personalities, their own individualities, but are inspired and guided by Jehovah. They know and promulgate the great moral doctrines of their predecessors; but they have penetrated spiritually into God's character and his essence, and they are impelled to tell their fellows what they have therein learned.

Now, as this study has shown, the prophets of Israel had always linked prophecy to activity; morality to politics or character;[55] but the great prophets of the Eighth Century before Christ took the historical movement of their own day and the character of their national life as foundation for their prophecies. The menace of enemy nations, injustice to the poor, debasement of worship *explain* the sin of Israel and Judah, the judgment of Jehovah, the means of judgment, the necessity for repentance, the immutable love of God for man with resultant restoration and salvation, the culmination, in means of salvation. In other words, these prophets used the circumstances of their national life to point to the

---

[55]Remember Nathan, Jeroboam I's nameless prophet from Judah, Elijah, Elisha.

eventual triumph of Jehovah's character over the power of evil, and to the salvation provided through the Immanuel of his chosen people for "all the nations of the earth."

Look, first, at their conception of the nations of Judah and Israel. These were parts of a chosen nation, chosen with Abraham, led from slavery by a prophet,[56] divinely given a country; *therefore* they should be moral nations, nations of priests before their righteous God, demonstrating his character to all nations. If they were not moral nations, for example if they desecrated their worship, if they permitted or fostered injustice between any man and any other man, they were *more* blameworthy than were heathen nations. Their great moral opportunity, neglected, must bring great punishment. Elijah and Elisha, after Moses, had spoken of this; but Amos crowded the conclusion on his hearers:

> Hear this word that Jehovah hath spoken against you, O children of Israel,
> against the whole family which I brought up out of the land of Egypt,
> saying, You only have I known of all the families of the earth:
> *therefore* will I visit upon you all your iniquities. Amos 3:1-2.

Hosea went a step further: if the chosen people rejected the God who had chosen them, they thereby broke the covenant and forfeited their preferment:

> . . . because thou hast rejected knowledge,
> I will also reject thee,
> *that thou shalt be no priest to me:*

---

[56]Hos. 12:13.

seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God,
I also will forget thy children. Hos. 4:6.

What constituted this moral rejection of God? In the first place, the people had lost through idolatry, through association with idolatry, through confusion of idolatrous ritual with worship acceptable to Jehovah, the ability to come in contact with the Deity. They had lost the power to discern that in two aspects, justice and love, lay the real significance of Israel's oneness with Jehovah. Israel had not been chosen to flaunt Jehovah, not to become rich under Jehovah or powerful under Jehovah, not to receive any worldly meed except such as might accrue to it as it met its moral responsibility. Israel was chosen to show to the world Jehovah's character; it must thereto show positive goodness, truth, unswerving justice, mercy, kindness, love. In order to be able to do this, Israel must worship purely and spiritually. The prophets do not deny the use of the temple ritual; they deny that ritual can at all be substituted for the kind of worship, the achieving of that understanding of Jehovah, that results in right conduct. Isaiah in one of his matchless climaxes questions:

Is not this the fast that I have chosen:
to loose the bonds of wickedness,
to undo the bands of the yoke, ...
Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry,
and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house?
When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him?[57]

The second doctrine the great prophets learned

[57]Isa. 58:6, 7. See also Amos 5:5, 14:21-24; Hos. 6:6; Micah 6.

grew from this conception of the moral responsibility Judah and Israel bore. Since the nations had failed morally, since they had never truly kept the covenant with Jehovah, since they have lost their preference, catastrophe is unavoidable; their sin has made it so.[58] Here the prophets laid hold of tangible, contemporary history for proof. Alliances with foreign nations will not strengthen Israel against an aggressor. Alliance with Jehovah only can avail, and Israel cannot depend on such alliance as her hereditary right until she has demonstrated her relationship with thorough social reform, with unalloyed justice to all. This reform cannot come until, to go back to the primary sin, Israel's thought pattern about Jehovah changes. So, Assyria will destroy the kingdom of Israel. This will not be because of Assyria's power, or because Assyria sat in repentance while Samaria did not, or because Assyria is better morally than Israel, but because Assyria is God's method of punishment, God's means of cleansing his chosen people of the associations that have induced the wrong conception of him and the resultant vicious way of life.[59] God is not in his providence shut up to Israel: "Shall it be said, O house of Jacob," asked Micah, "Is the Spirit of Jehovah straitened?"[60]

It seems amazing that the great Prophets of Israel could preach so surely this knowledge of the fall to Assyria while the political and civil leaders were still

---

[58]This is Enoch's old warning, punishment for sin, with a national reason therefor.

[59]Hos. 3:4-5; Isa. 10:5-6.

[60]Mic. 2:6-7.

dallying. The prophetic acceptance of Assyria as the means God would use to dissolve Israel for her cleansing put, in one step, the maintenance of true worship, pure religion, above the maintenance of the nation. Then the prophets went further. Out of the dissolution, the ruin, would come the nation's triumph. Through Jehovah's love this would come, because man of himself could not accomplish it: out of Jehovah's love that pursued man, out of His love from which evolved not only goodness but mercy. Assyria would, among many nations, conquer Israel; but out of the chaos would rise for the world, conqueror and conquered, the power and the character of Israel's God. All nations, coming to recognize that He alone is God, will seek him; and the moral unity of mankind will grow out of the universal recognition of his character.[61] This is, of course, the triumph of monotheism, the exaltation of the God of Holiness.

Beyond even this mighty conception, Micah and his fellows were able to go. Out of Israel,[62] they prophesied, would come a Savior, a Ruler, a Redeemer. Because of the Covenant he would be of Israel; because of the promise to David, he would be a king on the Davidic throne; because of the promises to Abraham and Jacob, from him would come blessing to all the nations of the earth. Hosea prophesied that Israel would return "to his goodness in the latter days." Isaiah said that he would be despised and rejected of men but that he would bear man's griefs and carry his sorrows; Micah said that he

---

[61]Mic. 4:1-8, Isa. 2:24.

[62]That is, out of the descendants of Jacob, Israel.

would come from Beth-lehem Ephrathah, and that his goings forth are "from everlasting." Isaiah called his name Immanuel, God-with-us.

Here, then, is the group of which Micah was one: the prophets of Israel, who are apart from other men, who groping at times still reached to such knowledge of the character of Jehovah that all men who seek truth continuously draw from them tangible help and inspiration. Thus it was that Micah the Morashtite wrote:

> But as for me,
> I am full of power by the Spirit of Jehovah,
> and of judgment,
> and of might,
> to declare unto Jacob his transgression,
> and to Israel his sin. (3:8).

II

BEHIND THE PROPHECY OF MICAH

"The word of Jehovah that came to Micah the Morashtite, in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, Kings of Judah,[1] which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem." (1:1)

THE HISTORY

Judah

UZZIAH. The period in which Micah began his ministry was comparatively good. Jotham was the son of Uzziah,[2] who had been for the great part of his fifty-two year reign a wise, thrifty king, a capable administrator; careful for Judah, devout before Jehovah. He had probably encouraged the foreign trade that had become increasingly important in the Hebrew nations since Solomon began to trade with Hiram of Tyre, and he had built up the country internally. He "loved husbandry," the record says, and encouraged agriculture, vines in the mountains, crops in the fields; he wanted the flocks to prosper, and had cisterns "hewn out" for them where they fed. He looked to the safety of the land also, fortifying Jerusalem and building towers on the

---

[1]For the Biblical account of these reigns: 2 Kings 15:32—20: 1; 2 Chron. 27-32.

[2]2 Kings 15, Here he is called both Azariah and Uzziah; 2 Chron. 26.

borders in the wilderness. He maintained an army under valiant leadership, clothed it well, armed it well, equipped it with engines to be mounted on towers and battlements, "wherewith to shoot arrows and great stones." He warred against the Philistines, breaking down the wall of the city of Gath, which was not far from Micah's home, and of Ashdod, where the shrine of their god Dagon was.[3] He fought the Arabians too, and evidently the Ammonites, for they gave tribute to him. He counted no defeats, because he was faithful to Jehovah, under the guidance of "Zechariah, who had understanding in the vision of God."[4] When he was old, an earthquake shook his country, and it must have been calamitous, because the horror of it stayed in the minds of the people of Judah. Amos wrote "in the days of Uzziah, King of Judah . . . . two years before the earthquake"; Therefore," warned Isaiah, "I will make the heavens to tremble, and the earth shall be shaken out of its place." Much later another Zechariah threatened. "Ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah."[5] Judah seems, however, to have recovered

---

[3]Dagon, god of the Philistines, had a merman's body. He seems to have been a sea god. See 1 Sam. 5:1-5. This is the god in whose temple Samson died.

[4]This relationship between king and prophet seems to parallel the later one between Hezekiah and Isaiah.

[5]Amos 1:1; Isa. 13:13 and 29:6; Zech. 14:5. Josephus says, *"Antiquities of the Jews,* IX, XX, that the earthquake came when Uzziah trespassed the sanctuary.

The earthquakes to which Jerusalem was subjected seem not to have hurt the city materially, but the coastal cities suffered. The Hauran, some twenty to thirty miles east of the Jordan and the Sea of Galilee, is covered with volcanic remains and signs of violent shocks. See 1 Kings 19:11 for the earthquake during Elijah's time.

quickly from this disaster, rebuilding, as Israel did, with native materials.[6] Uzziah's civic sin was that, though led by Zechariah, he permitted Judah to follow idolatry, sacrificing and burning incense in the "high places" dedicated to the Canaanite nature gods. His personal sin became pride; because of his internationally recognized success, he presumed to the prerogatives of the priesthood. He wanted to burn incense to Jehovah on the altar of incense; in spite of the protests of the Levites he took the censer into his hand, and Jehovah made him a leper to the day of his death. He lived in a house apart, and his son Jotham "was over the king's house, judging the people of the land."

Jotham. Jotham's was a goodly heritage, and he took care of it. He reigned for sixteen years, careful not to trespass the temple, as his father had, and building its upper gate. He instituted a program of city building and continued the fortification of Judah. This program was evidently extensive, for the prophets mentioned it. Hosea, over in Israel, for instance, warned, "Judah hath multiplied fortified cities" that could not withstand Jehovah's destroying fire. Jotham prevailed against Ammon in war, and collected heavy tribute for three years. Rezin of Syria and Pekah of Israel formed an alliance and "began to send" against Judah during Jotham's late reign, evidently with negligible results. The history says that "Jotham became mighty, because he ordered his ways before Jehovah his God." Yet, in spite of his unimpeached personal rectitude, he, as Uzziah before him,

[6]Isa. 9:10.

continued to countenance among the people heathen worship: ". . . the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense in the high places."

Ahaz. Judah had hardly a worse ruler than Ahaz, whose grandfather and father had evidenced to him the value of following Jehovah. He ruled for sixteen years, as had Jotham; and all of them were evil. He "walked in the way of the Kings of Israel," and picked up the most abominable of heathen rites on the side. The worst of these, though "he made molten images for the Baalim," was that he sacrificed his children by fire. The result of his wickedness was that, seeing Judah internally weakened, Israel and Syria again combined against Judah. The first attempt was unsuccessful;[7] but Syria came again, carrying away captives; then Israel came with devastation. Judah lost a hundred twenty thousand men in one day; the king's advisers fell to Zichri of Ephraim; two hundred thousand, "women, sons, and daughters," were taken captive and destined for slavery in Israel. That certain leaders in that country headed by a prophet named Oded and men from Ephraim insisted that Israel could not make involuntary slaves of their "brethren" indicates that in Israel was knowledge of this Mosaic law,[8] and respect for it. The interpretation made of it by Oded and his followers, "ye purpose that which will bring on us a trespass against Jehovah," was responsible for the fact that the captives were clothed,

---

[7]Isa. 7. This is the time Jehovah offered Ahaz a sign.
[8]Ex. 21:1-6; Lev. 25:39-43; Deut. 24:7.

shod, fed, and carried, some of the weaker on asses, to Jericho, where they rejoined their own people.

Ahaz, though, had not the wit or the religion to take advantage of this recognition of brotherhood. He went his godless way. When Edom and Philistia became menacing, he sent to the King of Assyria, asking alliance and protection.[9] Assyria harried Syria, and demanded therefor heavy tribute from Ahaz, but otherwise "helped him not." In time Ahaz sent his private treasure, and silver and gold from the Temple to Assyria as tribute. The account does not say to what extent the people also were taxed, but they could not have escaped heavy payments. Ahaz, following up the Assyrian alliance, went to Damascus to meet the conquering Tiglath-pileser, saw the altar in the temple of the Syrian god, and had it copied for the temple in Jerusalem. He ordered the brazen altar Solomon had dedicated to Jehovah moved and gave the new one prominence. He otherwise desecrated the Temple, and eventually closed it.

He sacrificed, in time, to the gods of Syria, figuring that since these had demonstrated more strength in battle than Jehovah, he would like to win their favor for himself. Idolatry then ran its horrible way, free in Judah. Sponsored by the king heathen shrines were erected in "every corner of Jerusalem," in every city of Judah, on the hills, and under every green tree. When he died, he left a citizenry depleted in number, harassed by invasions, impotent to follow systematically and profitably the husbandry Uzziah had loved; he left Jotham's fortifica-

---

[9]Isa. 7:17-20.

tions in ruins and the borders unprotected before the threat of Assyria; he left an army scattered as captives in Syria[10] and other foreign countries; he left a profaned and closed Temple, a people who had lost any closeness with Jehovah.

In his sixteen years Ahaz squandered all the strength and wealth Uzziah and Jotham had built for the country: "Jehovah brought Judah low because of Ahaz King of Judah; for he dealt wantonly in Judah, and trespassed sore against Jehovah."

Hezekiah. Hezekiah, his son, preserved somehow from the sacrifice Ahaz had made of his children, inherited a land that had become truly "an astonishment and a hissing"; but he was a good man, and humble; he became a great king. From the beginning he leaned heavily on Jehovah; and Jehovah's prophets served him, both Isaiah and Micah, "for he clave to Jehovah, keeping his commandments which Jehovah commanded Moses."[10] He reigned twenty-nine years, and the first of them is memorable to this day.

He began by restoring the worship of Jehovah; and worth noting is that he did this not by edict but by leadership. He called the Levites to help; and as they worked their duties grew so that they sanctified themselves and increased their own number. Their labor was prodigious. By the sixteenth day of the first month they had reclaimed the temple, restoring it, cleaning it, returning to it the sacred vessels. To worship there Hezekiah took first the princes of the city. The ritual

---

[10]For the status of captives in foreign countries see Appendix A.

of which they partook was that established by the commandment "of Jehovah by his prophets":[11] sacrifice, music as David had known it with cymbals, psalteries, harps; songs made by David and by Asaph the seer. Next, the king called the people of Jerusalem to worship. They came joyfully, with willing hearts; they became glad with worship; and with these, at last Hezekiah had the service of the house of Jehovah in order.

The city could not retain its joy. The king, the princes, and the assembly in Jerusalem sent letters to all Judah and to all Israel, to all the descendants of Jacob, to come to Jerusalem in the second month to celebrate the Passover "unto Jehovah the God of Israel." Some scoffed, laughing the posts to scorn; but many came, men from Asher, Manasseh, Zebulun, Issachar, even from haughty Ephraim. The crowd was a multitude, hungry to return to Jehovah, so great that the Levites could not sanctify all the worshipers when the Passover was killed and eaten on the fourteenth day of the second month of Hezekiah's reign. In this emergency the young king taught the people, as the prophets had ever tried to teach them, that ritual is not the essence of religion, that it is but the hand-maiden of spiritual reverence. Some, at the king's instance, took the Passover unsanctified by the Levites:

> For Hezekiah had prayed for them, saying, The good Jehovah pardon *everyone that setteth his heart to seek God, Jehovah the God of his fathers,* though he be not cleansed according to the purifica-

[11]Here is a statement of the use of the Mosaic law in Judah during the late Eighth Century, or the early Seventh, B. C.

> tion of the sanctuary. And Jehovah hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people. II Chron. 30:18, 19.

The feasts, the offerings, the joy—"since the time of Solomon . . . there was not the like in Jerusalem"—lasted the stipulated two weeks; and then the *people,* not the king alone, went out to destroy idolatry in Judah.

They broke the pillars of the Baalim and hewed down the sacred groves of the Asherim; they destroyed the high places and the multiplied altars. Hezekiah broke into pieces the brazen serpent Moses had held before Israel in the wilderness, because some Judeans had, it seems, formed a cult to worship it; they called it Nehushtan,[12] and burned incense to it. He established one altar, one only, for sacrifice, as Jehovah had stipulated through Moses,[13] and it was the Temple altar properly attended by Levites.

After this, provision was made for the upkeep of the Temple and of the priests; the people made their payments so eagerly that the Temple became rich, and great store was distributed and more was put away for religious purposes. The king set up taxes,[14] too, for the maintenance of the government, and organized a decent, respected authority. As the Temple had become rich, so the king and the kingdom grew rich. Then "after

---

[12]Nehushtan may be translated either Brass or Serpent; it is a proper noun. See Appendix B.

[13]Deut. 12:2-7.

[14]A. T. Olmstead, *History of Palestine and Syria,* Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1939, p. 465, tells of excavations of broken jar handles bearing official insignia, labeled, "For the King," indicating a tax in kind of oil and wine for the king. Amos writes of a similar tax of grain.

these things and this faithfulness" Hezekiah began to rebuild his kingdom. In his plans to keep the country safe, he assembled the army, made weapons, rebuilt towers and walls; especially he cared for Jerusalem, strengthening the citadel, engineering a water supply to be brought into the city by a conduit from a pool outside the walls. "And in every work that he began in the service of Jehovah, and in the law, . . . he . . . prospered," for he "wrought that which was good and right and faithful before Jehovah his God."

Inevitably he was drawn into foreign entanglements and into some fighting, though it is possible, if one may judge by the moral justness and purpose of his character, and by Isaiah's unchanging advice, that he had originally planned to be strictly neutral among the warring nations. The foreign troubles may have begun during the grave illness he suffered in the fourteenth year of his reign, while the kingdom affairs were necessarily in other hands. At any rate, he did make an ill-advised alliance with Egypt, patently against Assyria. He did invade Philistia successfully. He did receive an embassy from Babylon and vain-gloriously show them the wealth of his domain.[15] When Sargon of Assyria died, he did refuse to pay the accustomed tribute of Ahaz to the new Assyrian king, Sennacherib.

Three times, in retaliation, Assyria menaced Judah. The first time Hezekiah and the people turned the water supply from the Assyrian route, so that the army withdrew. The king in a noble address called the people to

---

[15]Solomon, before him, had shown his to the Queen of Sheba.

witness this deliverance as evidence that though with Assyria was material might, with Judah was Jehovah. "And the people rested themselves on the words of Hezekiah, king of Judah." The second time Assyria came in force. The army had conquered Babylon, then had turned to Sidon and Philistia. From Lachish in Philistia,[16] they turned to Judah taking forty-six walled towns and deporting two hundred thousand inhabitants. Hezekiah, Sennacherib wrote, "I shut up like a bird in a cage in Jerusalem his royal city."[17] Allowing for a conqueror's exaggeration it is easy to see why Hezekiah acceded to the Assyrian demand and paid heavy tribute.[18] Sennacherib then pushed his luck and sent men to demand the surrender of Jerusalem.

No more dramatic incident than this, perhaps, occurred during Micah's ministry. The Assyrian delegates, speaking in the Hebrew tongue, taunted Judah, her alliance, her king, and Jehovah, her God,[19] while the people lined the walls, silent and listening. Hezekiah turned to Jehovah through Isaiah for help; and Sennacherib "heard tidings" and withdrew. "Because of the raging against me," Jehovah's message to Assyria ran, "and because thine arrogancy has come up to mine ears, . . .

---

[16]A contemporary bas-relief now in the British Museum depicts the Assyrian king besieging Lachish.

[17]Prediction of this may be in Isa. 6:11 f. and is referred to in Isa. 1:7-9.

[18]The Biblical statement of the amount of this tribute agrees exactly with the Assyrian statement.

[19]These men seem less informed about Jehovah than did the citizens of Ninevah during Jonah's ministry, but they did know what Hezekiah had done about decreeing that sacrifices should be made at one altar only.

I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest."

The third attempt probably came later in the same campaign. This Assyrian summons to Jerusalem to surrender came from Libnah; and Hezekiah prompted by Isaiah, defied it: ". . . he shall not come into this city saith Jehovah. For I will defend this city to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. And the angel of Jehovah went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand. . . . So Sennacherib departed." Before he could come again two of his sons killed him with a sword as he worshiped at the shrine of his god Nisroch.[20]

After this Hezekiah and Judah turned to ways of peace; they could beat their swords into ploughshares and pruning hooks.[21] Cities grew, and flocks and herds; the king's storehouses were full of foods and of spices; his treasuries, of silver, gold, precious stones. He lost some of his personal humility as he grew older. Any man in order to stay close to Jehovah must of himself prefer spiritual rightness to any world accumulation of achievement, and the world presses hard on a successful man's senses. Hezekiah knew worldly honor and wealth; under his leadership Judah had become respected, and in his last days he did not deny himself pride. Still, he kept his faith in Jehovah, and with Jehovah, and he left the nation acquainted again with the God of Hosts, who sustained it.

There are some who say that the national turning

---

[20]This god is not mentioned elsewhere. The national god was Asshur.

[21]Joel 3:10.

to Jehovah under Hezekiah was mere hysteria, because under his immediate successors Manasseh and Amon, Judah again became idolatrous; but this changing seems rather to emphasize that each generation must determine its spiritual values; that religion is fundamentally of personal choosing. Uzziah and Jotham could not choose for Ahaz, and neither could Ahaz choose for Hezekiah, or Hezekiah for Manasseh and Amon, or they for Josiah. Jehovah could not even choose Israel with the result that Israel would become statically faithful. Every person in every generation has to make a moral choice; and it is tragically clear, from the strictures of Isaiah and of Micah on the leadership of Judah and on the social conditions, that the great turning to Jehovah under Hezekiah did not among many penetrate the shell of ritual. Still, these prophets, who had been citizens of Judah under Ahaz, and who must have witnessed the unrest, the violence, the apostasy incident to Israel's decline and fall, were privileged to see a great king lead a great people to the beginning of faithfulness.

Israel

It is well now to turn briefly to just what happened in Israel during Micah's life, because the prophet spoke to the capitals of both nations.

Pekah. Pekah,[22] the son of Remaliah, came to Israel's throne in the last year of the reign of Uzziah in Judah, during Jotham's regency. He followed four unfortunate kings: Zechariah, the son of strong Jeroboam II, whose

[22]For the reigns of Pekah and Hoshea and for the Assyrian resettlement see 2 Kings 15:8-16:31; 17:1-41.

reign had endured six months; Shallum, who killed Zechariah "before the people," and reigned one month; Menahem, who killed Shallum and ruled in Samaria for ten years before he died; and Menahem's son, Pekahiah, who had two years as king before Pekah banded with fifty other men to kill him. Israel had never had the pride in a dynasty that Judah had in the descendants of David.

It was during Pekah's[23] twenty year reign that Israel joined Syria to war against Judah, probably because Judah would not join them against Assyria. Both armies, as has been seen, took many captives from Judah, but of course Israel sent hers back from captivity to Jericho. Not long after, Assyria taking advantage of Judah's uneasy position and her request for help, marched against Syria, defeating King Resin; and then against Israel, capturing so much of the kingdom that to Pekah was left only a third of his former territory: Issachar, Manasseh, and Ephraim, the strongest of the three being Ephraim. This capture did not involve mere payment of tribute or quartering of enemy troops. Assyria planned to leave no pockets of resistance in her march to world sovereignty; she deported defeated populations. From Asher and Dan, from Naphtali and Zebulun, from Reuben and Gad, the inhabitants were moved to districts in Assyria. This scattering was an expected part of defeat at the hands of Assyria. The promise of a new homeland was part of the tirade delivered by the Assyrian embassy to the citizens on the walls of Jerusalem under Hezekiah: Yield to Assyria, they urged, and remain in peace in your own land *"until* I

[23]The annals of Tiglath-Pleser III record "Pekah I slew, Hoshea I appointed over them."

come and take you away to a land like your own land." Israel, under Pekah, was losing both the land of the Covenant and the people of the Covenant; and of course among the citizenry the king was held responsible. Assyria conspired with one of the malcontents, named Hoshea; and Pekah was murdered, as he had murdered Pekahiah, Hoshea succeeding under Assyria's protection to the throne.

Hoshea. Hoshea's reign began in the twelfth year of Ahaz of Judah, so that his nine year reign lapped over into Hezekiah's some five years. Until the death of Tiglath-pileser, three years after he had appointed Hoshea, Israel probably paid the tribute levied by the conqueror. Then an alliance of Israel with Egypt was projected. Hosea wrote of the see-saw unrest of those days: "They call unto Egypt, they go to Assyria"; "They make a covenant with Assyria, and oil is carried into Egypt."[24] After Shalmaneser's succession, Hoshea seems—the chronicle is not really clear—to have refused the payment and then, Assyria threatening, to have sent it. Hosea prophesied that even the golden calves would go to Assyria for their gold content, Judah being so nearly bankrupt and the tribute so heavy. The second time Hoshea refused to send the tribute, Assyria took cognizance of his messengers to So, the Ethiopian king of Egypt, charged Hoshea with conspiracy, and put him in prison, after which he is lost to the records. Then Shalmaneser went against Israel, defeating the army at Beth-Arbel,[25] and besieging

[24]Hos. 7:11, 12:1.
[25]Hos. 10:14.

Samaria for three years, during which time he died and was succeeded by Sargon. When at last Samaria fell,[26] in the sixth year Hezekiah was ruling in Judah, Assyria according to her custom deported the Israelites to Halah, on the Habor, on the Gozan, and among the Medes. Micah in the first chapter of his prophecy mourns for Samaria.

The Resettlement. The territory of Israel was however not, by any means, left uninhabited. Assyria, shifting her captive peoples, filled the country with foreigners: from Babylon, from Cuthah, from Avva, from Hamath and Sepharvaim came people to Israel, possessing the land, and establishing their separate religions. Israel had always desecrated the worship of Jehovah. The validity of Jeroboam I's calves had never been specifically questioned in the nation until Hosea. Israel, as that prophet showed, had confused their desecrated worship of Jehovah with the worship of the Baalim. Under Pekah and Hoshea, though probably less so under the latter, religion was to Israel rituals, and rituals were drunken orgies. These new settlers brought, each, to Israel a god. The Babylonians made Succoth-benoth; the Avvites made Nibhaz and Tartak; the Sepharvites burnt their children in the fire to Adrammalech and Anammelech,[27] their

---

[26]Sargon's Khorsbad inscription reads: "Samaria I besieged, I captured 27,290 of her inhabitants I carried away 50 chariots I collected from their midst. The rest of their property I had taken." Notice that he did not destroy the city.

[27]Notice the suffix of these names: Melech, which means king or lord, and was the name of the god of Ammon. Adram means prince.

gods; the people from Cuth made Nergal; those from Hamath, Ashima.

In addition, because lions had come on them during the early days of their occupancy, they asked to be taught "the law of the god of the land," so that they might honor him enough to be free of the lions. Thereto a priest of Samaria, not a Levite of course, was sent back to Israel, and in Beth-el instructed the new inhabitants "how they should fear Jehovah." In the end, ". . . They feared Jehovah, and served their own gods," which religious status was not much worse than that which Israel had tolerated for the most of her two and a quarter centuries, and that even Judah had known.[28]

Much of this history Micah certainly knew. Judah was bound to Israel by the ties of Abraham, of Jacob, of Moses and the Covenant, of the possession of Canaan, and of David the King. The people of Israel were people of the Promise, as were the people of Judah. Micah saw Israel torn from the promised land, and he looked into the reason: into the religion of Israel, and the resulting life of Israel with its social injustices, its venialities; then he looked on Judah. Israel was no more a nation; a people of the Covenant had no more a land. What, he asked, should become of Judah? Would the time come, and how soon would it come, when Judah too would sin itself out of the Covenant and out of the Land of the Promise? In Judah were surely exactly such sins as had been in Israel, except of course that Judah had never made an image to represent Jehovah, as Israel had.

---

[28]See under Solomon. 1 Kings 11:4-9.

THE SINS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL

Look now at certain of these sins, and at just how they broke the Covenant, departing from the Law as Moses had transmitted it from Jehovah.

Idolatry

As Hosea had shown Israel, the basic sin among the descendants of Jacob was, ever, idolatry. Jehovah's command was simple, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Thereto, he had forbidden that any Hebrew worship any material body:[29] animals, graven or molten images, trees or posts, pillars or hewn stones;[30] even the altars to Jehovah could not be made of hewn stones.

Heathen Rites

In addition, he forbade Israel to adopt any heathen sacrificial custom. To the Temple of Jehovah, for instance, could not be brought as offering the "hire" of a harlot,[31] but among worshippers of the Baalim were priestesses whose function was that of religious prostitu-

---

[29]Ex. 20:4; 23-25; 34:12-14. Lev. 26:1; 27:30. Deut. 27:2-8; 15; 29:16-21. 1 Kings 14:15. 2 Chron. 14:3; 17:6; 31:1.

[30]Groves of trees, single trees, even posts, were worshiped as the female counterpart of the Baalim. The significance was clearly reproduction and fecundity. Pillars, hewn stones, were erected to the Baalim, with a distinct phallic connotation. To illustrate, two pillars, male and female, stood before the Canaanite temple at Gezer. The worship was of the reproduction of life. Jehovah's attempt was to turn worship from physical to spiritual emphasis: "Thou shalt not plant thee an Asherah of any kind of tree beside the altar of Jehovah thy God . . . neither shalt thou set thee up a pillar, which Jehovah thy God hateth" (Deut. 16:21-22).

[31]Deut. 23:18.

tion, and whose "hire" was paid for the maintenance of the shrines to which they were attached. A Levite in the House of Jehovah was forbidden any wine or strong drink when he went into the tent of the meeting:[32] "it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations"; but the rituals of the Baalim were purposely celebrated with excess of drunkenness. Jehovah decreed that all sacrifices to him should be made at one altar; but the worshipers of Baal sacrificed at their high places, under every tree, by every brook.

Especially Human Sacrifice

In addition, to Jehovah only certain sacrifices were acceptable, and these he listed carefully. Human life was not among them. This study has included, so far, four references to human sacrifice. The first is the exact Mosaic instruction, "There shall not be found with thee anyone that maketh his son or daughter to pass through the fire."[33] The second was the account of the effect on the Kings of Judah, Israel, and Edom when they saw King Mesha of Moab[34] offer on the wall of Kir-hareseth. The third was the notation that Ahaz, whose great altar profaned the Temple of Jehovah, made his sons to pass through the fire. The parallel account in Second Chron-

---

[32]Lev. 10:8-9.

[33]Deut. 18:10; also Lev. 18:21 and 20:2-5; Deut. 12:31.

[34]Josephus says Mesha sacrificed his son to Jehovah, the god of the opposing armies; but this seems hardly right, as Jehovah was not the God of Edom. The Biblical account does not state to what God the sacrifice was made. If Mesha did sacrifice his son to Jehovah, he was ignorant of the divine commands, confusing his god's sacrifice with Jehovah's. See Appendix A.

icles reads, "Moreover he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnon, and burnt his children in the fire according to the abominations of the nations whom Jehovah cast out before the children of Israel."[35] With Ahaz, as with Mesha, the sacrifice of the royal heir, or heirs, may have come at a time of national peril. The fourth is the statement that the Sepharvites, among the new inhabitants of Israel, burnt their children in the fire to their gods.

Human sacrifice was not novel to the people of Micah's time.[36] It seems to have been practiced historically and with some frequency in times of distress among Semitic and Hamitic peoples. It was apparently not of Phoenician or Babylonian origin, and it was certainly indigenous to Canaan.[37] Abraham, it is remembered, was not shocked, was indeed ready, to sacrifice Isaac, his heir, at God's' command. The fundamental idea was the offering of the best to God, in order to atone for great sin or to propitiate a deity or to demonstrate great gratitude for mysteriously granted favor. Jehovah began to

---

[35]2 Kings 16; 2 Chron. 28:3.

[36]For a comprehensive short article on Human Sacrifice see Wm. Joseph McGlothlin, *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia,* Vol. IV, p. 2658.

[37]Canaanite sacrifice of children is evidenced by excavation of the High Place at Gezer, ancient royal Canaanite city on the boundary of Ephraim. R. A. S. Macalister, *Bible Sidelights from the Mound of Gezer,* 1906, reports that along with the sacred pillars of the High Place were clay vessels containing the skeletons of tiny babies. A. T. Olmstead, *op. cit.,* p. 64, notes the skeleton of a baby left on an altar of *unhewn* stone (an unhewn stone Canaanite altar is unusual; see Ex. 20:25) under the temple at Gezer. These are probably instances of the sacrifice of the first born.

teach his people with Isaac that, though the Hebrew word for sacrifice makes the shedding of blood the central feature, the divine attitude toward sacrifice is that obedience to the divine command, not the offering itself, is the essence of sacrifice. He began to show, too, with Isaac that human life is intended not for sacrifice but for sanctification and use to the purposes of the divine will. The later incident of the sacrifice in Israel of Jephthah's daughter[38] shows plainly that the girl was sacrificed by her father to his reputation or to his opinion of himself. Even though he considered keeping his impetuous vow obligatory, he could have redeemed his daughter for thirty shekels.[39] The sacrifice was not acceptable to Jehovah or sanctified by him. If Hiel the Bethelite did sacrifice his sons on the rebuilding of Jericho, and that he did is not certain,[40] he, like Jephthah, made a sacrifice unacceptable to Jehovah.

About the acceptability of such sacrifice Jehovah, after Isaac, had continued to leave no room for doubt. Aside from his previously mentioned inclusion of "anyone that makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire" among the abominations he hated, he at other times succinctly forbade the practice. Israel, he admonished, could not serve him as other nations serve their gods, because that worship was full of evil: "for even their sons and their daughters do they burn in the fire to their gods";[41] again, "And thou shalt not give any of

---

[38]Judg. 11.
[39]Lev. 27:1-8.
[40]1 Kings 16:34.
[41]Deut. 12:31.

thy seed to make them pass through the fire to Molech";[42] and more specifically:

> Whosoever he be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, that giveth of his seed unto Molech, he shall surely be put to death: the children of the land shall stone him with stones. I also will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from his people, because he hath given of his seed unto Molech, to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my holy name.[43]

Now, Jehovah did claim the first born, especially the first sons, of Israel, because he had secured the freedom of the people from bondage in Egypt by slaying all the Egyptian first born, man and beast. Thereto, he instituted the observance of the Consecration of the first born, the purpose of which was the sanctification, not the sacrifice, of these to the service of Jehovah.[44] Along with the first fruits, the firstlings of the flock, Israel brought to this feast the first sons. These last Jehovah had himself redeemed, and he made further provision for the redemption of any single firstling an Israelite might desire to preserve. Later, when he chose the Levites for his distinctive service, he freed the first born sons from even the sanctification.[45] He states the matter clearly:

> For all the first-born among the children of Israel are mine, both man and beast: on the day that I smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt I sanctified them for myself. And I have taken the Levites instead of all the first-born among the chil-

---

[42]Lev. 18:2.
[43]The entire passage is Lev. 20:1-5.
[44]Ex. 13:1-2; 13-15; 22:29.
[45]Num. 3:41, 44-51; 8:17-19.

> dren of Israel. And I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron . . . to do the service of the children of Israel in the tent of meeting, and to make atonement for the children of Israel. Num. 8:17-19.

This insistence on the needlessness of human sacrifice seems, indeed, to point to some historical tendency to this custom among the Israelites. Further, in spite of Jehovah's unequivocal statements and instructions, the records show clearly that in both Israel and Judah at the periods preceding the dispersion of Israel and extending to the Babylonian captivity of Judah, parents did burn their children as sacrifices. The cases of Isaac, of the sons of Mesha and of Ahaz, even that of Jephthah's daughter, indicate sacrifice of the heir,[46] but it is not to be thought that this extreme sacrifice was limited to the heir or to royalty. Among the sins listed as those bringing on the dispersion of Israel[47] along with making molten golden images of two calves to represent Jehovah, with worshiping the Baalim, the Asherah and "the host of heaven," with practicing divination and enchantment, is the ominous, "And they caused their sons and daughters to pass through fire."

Just outside the walls of Jerusalem lay the Valley of the Son of Hinnon,[48] where Ahaz and, after Hezekiah, Manasseh sacrificed their children. But there were other

---

[46]Philo of Bilbus wrote that a Cronus (Lord, King) of Phoenicia sacrificed his son Jeoud (which means "only begotten") in his royal robes on an altar as a ransom for the safety of the people. In some respects this parallels the case of Mesha.

[47]2 Kings 17:16-17.

[48]2 Chron. 28:3; 33:6. The meaning of the "Son of Hinnon" is not known. Josh. 15:8; 18:16.

places so used by the people. Isaiah, probably even during the reforms of Hezekiah, spoke of idolatry and human sacrifice practiced secretly by Judeans: ". . . are ye not children of transgression, . . . ye that inflame yourselves among the oaks[49] . . . that slay the children in the valleys, under the clefts of the rocks."[50]

The method by which the children were sacrificed has not been determined. Biblical writers speak of the rites with abhorrence, avoiding the word sacrifice, usually substituting the expression "pass through the fire." The act, though, was not that of walking between fires or through fire, but of burning. Ahaz, "burnt his children in the fire." In Ezekiel the expression is "to pass through the fire to be devoured"; in Leviticus, "pass through the fire to Molech." It may be that in some instances the children were slain at the sanctuary first, and the bodies burned thereafter. This was Abraham's intention with Isaac. Isaiah's rebuke is to those "that slay the children," and Mesha offered his son "on the wall." If this was the general procedure, the ritual approximated that of the sacrifice of animals to Jehovah; and it may be that the cause of the continuation of this sin in Judah parallels the cause of the sin of idolatry as Hosea showed it to Israel: a confusion by the people of the commands of Jehovah; a general ignorance of what Jehovah required

---

[49]A clear reference to heathen rituals in the sacred groves of the Asherim.

[50]Isa. 57:4-5. See for the continuation of human sacrifice until the Babylonian captivity: 2 Kings 21; 2 Chron. 33; Jer. 7:31; 19:3; 32:35; Ezek. 16:2f; 20:31; 23:37; Psa. 106:37f. For Josiah's effort to stop the practice, 2 Kings 23:10. See also the law stated in Deut. 27:15.

and of what was acceptable to him; a lack of discrimination between Jehovah and Baal. This, if so, was so in spite of Jehovah's command that the law be kept by the side of the Ark of the Covenant, studied by priests and rulers, and taught to the people, even the sojourners, every seven years.[51] In this connection, the fact that some of the niceties of the Mosaic law were recognized by the people should not be overlooked. In this study examples have been given: Israel's refusing to compel Judeans to slavery; Hezekiah's reinstitution of one altar for sacrifices; the elaborations of the Temple rituals; it will be seen later that Ahab knew the Mosaic laws about hereditary land, and Micah knew them in his time. Israel and Judah were not entirely ignorant of the law.

However, whatever the procedure practised in Judah in making human sacrifices, there was actual burning by fire to at least one Semitic god, Molech of Ammon, mentioned often in the Old Testament.[52] This god was represented in Phoenicia by a hollow, calf-headed image of bronze. It was supposed to be the color of the sun, and it represented the sun. In order to secure the "renewal" of the solar fires each year, human victims, usually children, were placed on the outstretched, tilted hands of this image, from which they slid into the furnace inside. Those people who witnessed these sacrifices danced to

---

[51]Deut. 17:18; 31:9-13, 24-26.

[52] Molech, Moloch, Milcom, Malcan, Malsan, Melech. This was a god among the Semites from early times. The name is found among Ammonites, in Micah's time, and among Phoenicians, Canaanites, Aramaeans. See John Milton's *Paradise Lost,* Bk. I. Milton's Source is the first century B.C. *Historical Library* by Diodorus Siculus.

music pitched to drown the cries of the burning.[53] Judah and Israel, close by Ammon, may have contracted this horror from that nation, just as at different times some Hebrews worshiped the god of Moab; some, the Asherim and the Baalim of Canaan; and Ahaz, the god of Syria.[54]

THE SOCIAL CONDITIONS

It is no wonder that with Jehovah's laws concerning worship so sullied, so confused, his laws concerning social justice, man's attitude toward other men, should also have been wrecked. Judah and Israel, even under the good kings, Uzziah, Jotham, and Hezekiah, had not the consistent religion that penetrated to the depth of human activities. If the social criticisms of the prophets are to be trusted, men gave to the Temple worship liberally of money they filched from less able men, and called it worship.

The Hereditary Land

Jehovah had carefully started Israel as a nation of men in approximately equal material standing. Two tribes, Reuben and Gad, and the half-tribe Manasseh chose not to inhabit Canaan but to live beyond the Jordan. Levi had no tribal portion because the function of the tribe was the priesthood, and Jehovah made special economic provision for the members.[55] To the other tribes the land of Canaan, under the eye of Joshua and the High-priest Eleazer, was portioned according to the "sum of the people" by lot. That is, a tribe drew land

---

[53]James G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough,* Chapter 24.
[54]Deut. 32:17.
[55]Num. 35:8.

in proportion to the number of people in it; then within the tribe the land was, under the direction of a prince of that tribe, again proportioned by lot: "And ye shall inherit the land by lot according to your families; to the more ye shall give the more inheritance; and to the fewer thou shalt give the less inheritance; wheresoever the lot falleth to any man, that shall be his; according to the tribes of your fathers shall ye inherit."[56]

So, the distribution; clearly Jehovah intended that each man should have his own vine and fig-tree; his own house and land. Thereto the people were strict about the landmarks. Moses commanded, "Thou shalt not remove thy neighbors' landmark, which they of old time have set, in thine inheritance," and one of the curses of Ebal ran, "Cursed be he that removeth his neighbor's landmark." There were further provisions: one was that a man's daughters had the right to inherit his land, and she should marry within her own tribe so that the land would remain a part of the original tribal portion.[57] Laws of succession were determined, and the right of the oldest son was protected.[58] Thus, as nearly as possible, there were provisions to insure to any person his hereditary land. Even a king could not infringe on a citizen's hereditary land and go scatheless, as witness Ahab and Naboth. Moreover, if a man should lose his property he,

---

[56]Num. 26:4, 53-56; 32:18, 28; 33:54; 34:13-29. Notice that this system is *not* communism. See Micah 2:2 and 4:4.

[57]Deut. 19:14; 27:17. Hosea's rebuke to apostate princes of Judah is, "The princes of Judah are like them that remove the landmark" (Hos. 5:10).

[58]Num. 27:1-11 and 36; 27:8-11; Deut. 21:15-17.

or a kinsman for him, could redeem it at any time.[59] This approximately fixed the price of real property.

There were still more drastic provisions, pointed distinctly against any person's losing his land and against any person's accumulating his neighbor's land. No hereditary property could be sold in perpetuity. Every seventh year was divinely designated a "Year of Release" of debts;[60] and when seven Years of Release had passed and the seventh month of another year had begun, that is every fiftieth year, Israelites were commanded to celebrate Jubilee Year.[61] It was to be proclaimed by trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month, the Day of Atonement. The great feature of the Jubilee Year, along with the lesser features of the liberation of Hebrew slaves and extremely simple living, was that all real property was to be returned to the family line of the original owners, so that the hereditary divisions might be re-established. What land had been perverted to other ownership by disaster or sin was to be restored. The same rule was to be applied to houses outside walled cities.

Jehovah's intent about the land was clear: it was for the maintenance and enjoyment of a "holy people"; it was not to be used at all by the few. No one had a right to more than Jehovah had awarded him, but he did have a right to that. Israelites were not to lose sight of the fact that they were brethren and co-sharers of God's good gift of the land, of the fact that for one to achieve more than his part at the cost of depriving another was sin.

---

[59]Lev. 25:25-28.
[60]Deut. 15:1-2.
[61]Lev. 25:9-10, 13, 28.

Jehovah reminded them, "The land is mine" and again, "Ye are strangers and sojourners with me." That Israel ever observed the Jubilee Year is not recorded, but it was a definite provision in Jehovah's plan for a holy nation.

Other Property

Jehovah had laid down strict rules, too, concerning honest handling of other property. A man was obliged to respect anything that belonged to another: his grapes, for instance, and his grain. If his stock strayed or his garment were lost, and a man found either, he should restore it; or, if he could not, he should keep it safe until the neighbor came seeking it. If a man kept an animal that harmed his neighbor or the property of his neighbor, he must make restitution; if a man kept an open pit and his neighbor's stock fell into it, he must pay the neighbor for it; if a man's stock fed in another's field, the first man must make restitution; if a man was responsible for a fire that grew until it consumed another's property, he must pay for it.[62] A man was strictly accountable for anything left in his care, whether he were trustee or borrower—"For every matter of trespass," the law read, "Whether it be for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, or for any manner of lost thing, . . . the cause of both parties shall come before God; he whom God shall condemn shall pay double unto his neighbor."

Business Dealings

Further, business dealings were to be scupulously honest. A man who worked with weights and measures

---

[62]Deut. 23:24-25; 22:1-4. Ex. 21:28-35; 22:1-15.

must have only a "perfect and just" weight and measure. A man who tricked another out of his due by the use of dishonest weights and measures was "An abomination unto Jehovah."[63] If a man dealt falsely in any matter of bargain or deposit; if he robbed another; if he kept property he had found, he had to restore what he had taken and add a fifth part thereto. In addition, he had to bring a trespass offering to Jehovah.[64]

The handling of money was to be between Israelites an act of brotherly helpfulness, not a business. If a man had more than enough and his neighbor had not enough, to help was the privilege of the more fortunate. "Thou shalt not lend upon interest to thy brother. . . . unto a foreigner thou mayest lend upon interest; but unto thy brother thou shalt not."[65] Nobody could take as loan-collateral from his brother anything not voluntarily offered, and he could not keep that overnight if the borrower were poor or if the article put in trust were a necessary part of his life. "No man shall take the mill or the upper millstone to pledge; for he taketh a man's life to pledge; . . ." "Thou shalt not . . . take the widow's raiment to pledge," . . . "If thou at all take thy neighbor's garment to pledge, thou shalt restore it unto him before the sun goeth down: for that is his only covering."[66]

With helpless or uninformed people a man should be carefully honest and kind. He should not exploit or take advantage of or misuse widows or orphans, sojourn-

---

[63]Deut. 25:13-16.
[64]Lev. 6:1-7.
[65]Deut. 23:19-20.
[66]Deut. 24:6, 10-13; 26. Ex. 22:26.

ers or servants; slaves or even female slaves:[67]

> . . . for ye were sojourners in the land of Egypt;
> Remember thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt;
> If thou afflict them at all . . . I will surely hear their cry.
> Thou shalt not muzzle the ox where he treadeth out grain.

As a final safeguard for the weak against business sharp-dealing, Jehovah decreed the Year of Release,[68] mentioned before, every seven years: at which time all debts between Hebrews were canceled, all Hebrew slaves who wished to be released were released, and men neither cultivated food nor bought and sold it. The debtors were released without obligation and the slaves who were freed were furnished liberally, "Because Jehovah's release hath been proclaimed."

The Poor

In addition, Jehovah decreed humane, even appreciative, treatment of the poor. He told the Hebrews that under the provisions he had made for them no poor should be among them. But this blessing hinged, as did all the blessings he made for his people, on their obedience to his commandments: such commandments, for instance, as the laws of trespass, of hereditary land, of lending money. His statement runs, "Howbeit there shall be no poor with thee . . . if only thou hearken diligently unto the voice of Jehovah thy God, to observe to do all

---

[67]Ex. 21:1-11, 20-27; 22:1-24; 23:8-9; 27:19. Deut. 15:15; 24:17; 25:4. Lev. 25:55ff.

[68]Deut. 15:1-18.

this commandment.[69] Then, with sad realization of Israel's repeated failures to observe his laws, he set about making provision for the poor and made himself their Protector and Savior, "For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore *I* command thee, saying, Thou shalt surely open thy hand to thy brother . . . in thy land."[70]

Jehovah himself led the way. He had decreed that all men should appear thrice yearly before his altar with an offering; and the gift acceptable to God was the gift made according to each man's ability:[71] ". . . if his means suffice not for a lamb," the instructions in connection with sin offerings read, he can bring two turtle doves or two young pigeons, and if he cannot afford those Jehovah would accept the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour.[72]

Notable, too, is the fact that some of Israel's most able leaders had come from the less fortunate of the people. This was a matter of history; and, judging by the casual references to history in Hosea for instance, the people were acquainted with the great stories. Gideon is a case in point. When called, he protested, ". . . my family is the poorest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house."[73] The lesson is that the poor can

---

[69]Deut. 15:4-5.

[70]Deut. 15:11.

[71]Deut. 16:16-17. See also Deut. 12:21-28 and the evil interpretation of this consideration in Judg. 17-18.

[72]Lev. 4:27 ff; 5:7-11. In line with making religious gifts conformable to the donor's ability is David's refusal to offer as burnt offering animals that cost him nothing. He could afford to make a costly offering, and insisted on doing so.

[73]Judg. 6:15.

be of great value to a nation; they are more often the back-bone of the national economy than a drain on it. It was to the nation's interest, to the building of a strong nation, a high-minded, high-moraled nation, that Jehovah strictly enjoined those people who were able to provide for those less strong, their brethren. The strong were to do this with open minds, uncalculatingly, ungrudgingly.[74]

For all men there would be enough to eat if some olives were left on the trees, some grapes on the vines; if the corners of grain fields were left unharvested and the gleanings and the lost sheaves where they fell;[75] if a man harvested his fields, his vineyards and oliveyards for six years but left the produce in the fallow fields of the seventh year, "that the poor of thy people may eat."[76] No servant would be overworked if every seventh day he or she could rest.[77] Further the fortunate must not be impatient about this matter of rest for servants for "thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt." A servant should not be oppressed, and his wages should be paid him in full and promptly, "lest he cry against thee unto Jehovah, and it be a sin unto thee."[78]

If a Hebrew should come to such extremity that he must sell himself, or his family must allow such sale, he was not to be considered a bond servant, and the deal-

---

[74]Deut. 15:7-10.

[75]Ruth, the Moabitess, ancestress of David, availed herself of this provision for the poor in the fields of Boaz near Bethlehem. Deut. 24:19 ff; Lev. 23:22.

[76]Ex. 23:10-11.

[77]Ex. 23:12.

[78]Deut. 5:12-15; 24:14-15; 25:4.

ings on the part of the buyer must be just; in time, too, as this study has shown, the unfortunate person was to be provided his freedom if he so desired and furnished with the essentials of life.[79]

Justice

Finally, to all Hebrews justice was due. Judges and officers were to be appointed to sit in all the gates and to judge the people with righteous judgment.[80] They were enjoined to see that the fortunate could not steal from the poor, or connive against them, or bear false witness against them. The judges themselves were not to be influenced by a bribe or to allow a witness to be so influenced. "Thou shalt not wrest the justice due to thy poor in his cause. Keep thee far from a false matter. . . . And thou shalt take no bribe, for a bribe blindeth them that have sight, and perverteth the words of the righteous."[81] "Cursed be he," ran one of the curses of Ebal, "that wresteth the justice due to the sojourner, fatherless, and widow." Yet, and this is important, and it was something Micah knew, a judge must not turn aside from justice to tip the scales for a poor man. In Jehovah's justice the rich must help the poor, but the poor must not prey on the rich.[82]

IN MICAH'S TIME

All this history, all this body of specific instruction regarding worship and social justice emphasizes the fact

---

[79]Lev. 25:39 ff; Ex. 21:1-11.
[80]Deut. 16:18; 19:15 ff.
[81]Deut. 10:18; 24:17-18. Ex. 23:6-8.
[82]Ex. 23:1-3.

that Jehovah's requirement of his people was simple. It boiled down to a demand for a conception and understanding of the character of Jehovah which result in a realization of the sacredness and the purpose of human life: a demand for personal righteousness, for justice in human relations, for unselfish love between any man and any other man.[83] Provided with this simplicity of demand and this multiplicity of helpful instruction, how had the Hebrews as a race answered Jehovah's hope for a holy nation, "a nation of priests" to him? This chapter showed, first, that the nation had failed terribly in the matter of worship. Even under the high leadership of Hezekiah, some Judeans were idolatrous, venally wicked, religiously wanton. Socially, matters were openly distressed. Micah spoke to the capitals of Judah and Israel: to Jerusalem which had been a city before history was written[84] and which David chose as his capital; to Samaria, the new city Omri had built on a hill purchased from Shema.

The Hebrews had become increasingly since Solomon began to build the Temple city men, merchants, traders, financiers. In the cities lived the leaders: civic, military, and religious. The people who still lived in the country had been harassed by invading armies, losing of their number those killed, those captured; losing their homes, losing their crops. Perhaps they could not keep financial pace with taxes, with the life the cities imposed on the

[83]Lev. 19:18.

[84]First Biblical reference is to "Salem," Gen. 14:18. First certain historical reference is from about 1450 B.C. in letters of Abd Khiba, representative of King of Egypt, who had taken it from Jebusites. See also 2 Sam. 5:55 ff.

country. They began to lose their hereditary lands. They sold themselves, their sons and daughters, into slavery. Amos tells twice, in his anger, of a person who was sold for the price of a pair of shoes.[85] Joel saw a slave girl sold by foreigners for wine.[86] Amos knew of needy people kept from their rights, of bribes that perverted justice, of interest taken in exactions of wheat.[87] He saw a temple built in Jehovah's name, paid for at least in part by offerings from the poor and called by the High Priest, "the King's sanctuary" and "a royal house."[88] Hosea accused Israel "the balances of deceit are in his hand; he loveth to oppress."[89] Isaiah, while he thanked Jehovah, "for thou hast been a stronghold to the poor," cried to the elders and the princes, ". . . the spoil of the poor is in your houses; what mean ye that ye crush my people and grind the face of the poor?"[90] He called to the rich, "Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no room; . . ."[91] and Micah gave equally grim warning to those who devise and work evil "because it is in the power of their hand," who "covet fields and seize them, and houses and take them away: and they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage."[92]

---

[85]Amos 2:6; 8:6.

[86]Joel 3:3.

[87]Amos 5:1-12.

[88]Amos 7:13.

[89]Hos. 12:7.

[90]Isa. 3:14-15.

[91]Isa. 25:8.

[92]Mic. 2:1-2. The words "his heritage" indicate "his hereditary land."

III

MICAH THE MORASHTITE AND HIS PROPHECY

"I am full of power by the spirit of Jehovah." (3:8)

Micah, who directed his messages of warning to the capital cities of Judah and Israel, was from the small Judean town Moresheth, close to the border between Judah and Philistia. It was, indeed, designated Moresheth-Gath after the Philistine city Gath, which lay some twelve or fifteen miles west. The country along that border is made up of lush valleys broken by chalk hills; it is watered by flowing springs and is fertile: a country kind to man and beast. The people called it the Shᵉphē-lāh. Moresheth itself seems to have been located on one of the chalk hills, nine hundred to a thousand feet above sea level, some twenty miles from the coast to the west, some twelve from the important Judean city of Lachish to the southwest, some twenty-five from Jerusalem to the northeast. Below, through the valleys ran the historic highway between Asia and Africa, with the Judean entrance at Lachish.

From his home Micah may well have watched the traffic on this highway: trade caravans, ambassadors with their trains, armies with their equipment, armies with their captives. Trade was busy between the inland and

the coast, between Judah and her neighbors. Oil and wool going out, spices and metals coming in. Along the road went envoys from Judah and Israel carrying tribute each year to a foreign king, Judah's treasure, Israel's treasure. Along the road came Babylon's ambassadors to bring Hezekiah a present, and to spy on his kingdom. The armies of Judah and Israel, of Philistia and Ammon and Edom, of mighty Assyria, marched this highway. Unfortunate, wretched Judeans trod it to captivity; the whole population of Israel trod it in dispersion; and foreigners crowded it on their way to possess Israel.

THE STYLE AND FORM OF HIS PROPHECY

Much of this varying movement is reflected in Micah's prophecy. The first chapter furnishes an example. As the prophet names the towns around him, he connects them with their memorable suffering at the hands of invading armies: the chariot bound to the swift steed bringing the fearful news from Lachish; the wailing at Bethezel, the mourning of the women of Moreshah. In later passages the movement continues: "thou shalt come even unto Babylon," "now many nations are assembled against thee," "He hath gathered them as sheaves to the threshing floor," "When the Assyrian shall come into our land," "I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee . . . and will throw down all the strongholds," "thou shalt sow but shall not reap," "a day for building thy walls," and the anticipated journeying of the exalted, ". . . many nations shall go and say, come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah."

Of all the Old Testament prophecies, Micah's is the

most exquisitely ordered, the most compact. It has, in addition, eloquence and beauty of phrasing equal to the great Isaiah's, and at times even more simplicity, even more spiritual fervor and power of message.

With the other literary prophets Micah shared much in style.[1] He used references to nature as illustrative of God's dealing with his people, or as God's servant used by him as a means to an end. The first division of Micah's prophecy begins with a vivid description of a volcanic eruption or an earthquake, which he says is Jehovah's means of witnessing against his people. In such vein, Joel and Amos spoke of insects that devoured the food crops; Hosea spoke of a covenant with beasts and birds and creeping things for the good of the people; Isaiah, of the grass that withered and the flower that faded under the breath of Jehovah. Micah's figures involving animals, too, are much like those found in the other prophets: the flocks, the lion, the young lion, the night-howling jackal, and the ostrich that mingled his cry as guttural and as loud as the lion's roar with the jackal's. These were animals that the people knew, and lent themselves to the furtherance of popular understanding of the prophet's teaching.

Micah's references to history follow the usual pattern;

---

[1]The work of some literary prophets has been lost, along with the old song book, The Book of Jashar, and some histories. This study has mentioned existing prophecies: Joel, about 815 B.C.; Jonah, about 785 B.C.; Amos, about 775 B.C.; Hosea, about 775-722 B.C.; Isaiah, about 740-698 B.C.; Micah, about 735-722 B.C. The authors of Kings and Chronicles list more: the Prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, the Vision of Iddo the Seer concerning Jeroboam the Son of Nebat, among others.

and it should be noticed that all these literary prophets knew history, and referred to it typically, as if the people would understand their meanings. Micah, for instance, casually mentions Nimrod, the grandson of Ham, the founder, according to the Genesis account, first of Babylon and then of Nineveh,[2] the first man in the Bible to be called a king. Judah's two great potential enemies, Babylonia and Assyria, had roots in Nimrod. Micah threatens these nations, "They shall waste the land of Assyria . . . and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof." At another time he called Assyria "Ashur," which was the name either of the old capital of that country before Nineveh was founded or of the great god of that people, the earth god. Micah knew that Bethlehem was the hereditary home of the line of David. He knew, of course, the story of the Exodus: Jehovah's covenant with the people; the leadership of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam; the confederacy of Balak and Balaam. He knew the character and the work of Omri and Ahab. These references he used much as the other prophets used history: to point up Jehovah's goodness, to remind the people of their perfidy; to emphasize the divine promise of a king from the line of David, from Bethlehem, to whose kingdom many people would flow.

Stylistically, he picked and chose from earlier Hebraic literature. His "Hear ye peoples, all of you," goes back to that other prophet of the same name, Micaiah son of Imlak, who alone spoke truth to Ahab, closing his prophecy and his own career with those words.[3] The admonition

---

[2]Gen. 10:6.

[3]2 Chron. 18:27; 2 Kings 22:28.

"Tell it not in Gath," with which he begins the description of mourning in the Sh^{e}phēlāh, echoes words from the first stanza of David's elegy on the death of Saul and Jonathan.[4] Perhaps he counted on the people's recognizing the quotations, on rousing their interest through the recognition, on setting a certain tone in his discourse through the people's familiarity with the older literature.

He used the prophetic formulae of the pronounced woe;[5] of the controversy, or lawsuit, between Jehovah and his people, or of a dialogue between Jehovah and the prophet, or between the prophet and a person or persons;[6] of the song to Jehovah's praise;[7] of personal grief over the condition or the fate of the nation;[8] of the highly mannered play on words.[9] He used with great skill the parallelism characteristic of Hebrew poetry, especially synthetic and climactic parallelism. He shared with Hosea abrupt breaks in thought sequences; and yet he shared with Isaiah an over-all progressive and logical movement, of beginning and end.

The book is cast in three prophetic addresses, clearly distinguished. Each begins with a summons to hear: "Hear all ye nations," "Hear ye, O heads of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel,"[10] "Hear ye then what Je-

---

[4]2 Sam. 1:20.

[5]Amos 6:1; Isa. 5:8-22, 10:1; 28:1-7; 31:1; 45:9; Hos. 7:13.

[6]Hos. 4:1 (incomplete), 9; Isa. 63:1-6.

[7]Isa. 25; Hos. 14; Joel 2:21-32.

[8]Amos 7:2; Isa. 6:10-11, 20; 21:1-2; Joel 1:8-20.

[9]Hos. 8:7; Isa. 10:28-32.

[10]This sentence is repeated as summary, at the end of the first part of this second section, and is followed by the contrasting conjuction *But*.

hovah saith." The material of each section passes through three phases, from accusation, to judgment, with these two repeated in the first and the second sections, and then to promise. The whole presents intricate interdependence. In the first division, the threat of judgment dominates. In the second, the contrast between Judah's sin and her final glory in the person of the universal King, the emphasis lies on salvation through the King, the messianic promise. The third division stresses a call to the nation to repent so that it may earn salvation. It is easy to see that the last division depends on the first two; that the second reverts to the first.[11] There is minor internal interlocking, too: for instance the allusion to the complete destruction of the capital cities is in all three sections.[12] In each is a reference to specific phases of idolatry.[13] In each social sin against the unfortunate is emphasized.[14] These are but examples of a greater number of such interdependencies.

Dr. Pusey has called attention to the climactic progress of the promises that close each of the three sections: first, a general promise of deliverance from bondage; second, an objective promise of Messianic deliverance; third, a subjective promise following repentance.[15]

HIS MESSAGE

So much for the way in which Micah built his proph-

---

[11]For suggested outlines of the prophecy see Appendix C.

[12]I, 1-6; II, 3:12; III, 6:16.

[13]I, 1:7; II, 5:12-14; III, 6:7.

[14]I, 2:1-5; II, 3:2-4; III, 6:10-12.

[15]E. B. Pusey, *The Minor Prophets,* Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Vol. II, p. 9.

ecy. As to his message, he again, shared with his fellows. His thought sequence is, as shown above, like Hosea's: accusation, judgment, promise. His great message, and whether he or Isaiah knew it first does not matter, is the message of a spiritual kingdom, universal in its scope, of peace. He seems to have accepted the fact that the existence of this kingdom would never involve the reinstitution of the Israelite nations; as he understood Jehovah's purposes, these nations had failed, the covenant had been an experiment that had ended badly; but there would be a kingdom over which would reign a king from the line of David. He would come not from David's capital city but from David's hereditary home, Bethlehem.[16] This Leader of the Promise, Micah and Isaiah agreed, would not be of the nation's mighty but of its humble. He would not lead armies against the Gentiles, but his rule would have such virtue that the Gentiles would of themselves turn to him. His activities would be those of peace: he would cure their ills; he would clear the understanding of the rich so that they would no longer use their power to pile up strength that was vicious strength, building Zion with the people's blood and Jerusalem with their own iniquity.

Against this coming kingdom Micah set the steps God's chosen people must take to reach it; here he preaches his great lessons of justice to all, and, because he saw so little of it around him, especially of justice to

---

[16]The name means House of Bread. It was too small to be listed in Joshua's roster of cities; and, when Nehemiah wrote, the men of Bethlehem and Netophah number one hundred eighty-eight.

the poor. He showed the conditions under which the poor labored, and then he showed what the capital cities, or the people in whose hands the power lay, were doing to create those conditions. In this message he shared with Amos and Isaiah insistence on justice for all, though his sympathy lay more than did theirs with the poor of the countryside.

Micah's first accusation was that the powerful were depriving the humble of that material provision Jehovah had made impartially for the livelihood of all his people, of their hereditary lands. The rich had set about doing this deliberately and evilly, with the cunning use of scant measures, of wicked balances, of a bag of deceitful weights. They were protected in their depredations by judges whose eyes bribes had blinded to justice, by church-men who were false to their calling and inimical to the people. These were judges and prophets whose interest, consciously or unconsciously, was good living; who could, so, shut their eyes to the evil conditions their rich patrons created. These powerful ones relied, blind themselves, on Jehovah's maintenance, remembering his promise to protect them as a people, but forgetting what kind of people they had to be in order to earn the protection; forgetting even that Jehovah had chosen them to show his goodness to the world, not to acquire its goods. They could not see even past their greediness to the fact that where they took the people's land they took their security, and that with the people's security went the nation's.[17] As Hosea had warned that sexual depravity would ruin

[17]In this connection read Bradford Chambers, "The Boy Gangs of Mousetown," *The Reader's Digest,* August, 1948, p. 143.

Israel, so Micah warned that economic depravity would ruin Judah. The powerful would take the people's lands and their clothes; would hurt the women; would create conditions under which men, women, and children could not eat enough and so could not be strong. Then, inevitably, the nation's defense, which rests always on the poor, would be debilitated, helpless against aggression; and in that day the heathen would possess all that the powerful had sinned to gain: land, treasure, cities—all.

Back of this blindness on the part of the powerful lay, Micah showed, not only forgetfulness of the role the Israelites were to play under the Covenant but a loss of the right conception of the character of Jehovah and of worship acceptable to him. The sin of Jacob lay, Micah preached as earnestly as Hosea, as vividly as Amos and Isaiah, in the "high places" of Judah; and how many of these did Jerusalem sustain? There, among the mighty and the influential were the graven images, the idols, the pillars, the Asherim, all the work of men's hands; there was the disgraceful worship from which the hire of the harlot was presented as offering to Jehovah; there, close by, was the horrible place of sacrifice in which men burned their children. Micah urged Judah to realize that religion is reasonable and moral, and simple. It is man's realization of God's character, with humility in the realization; and the treatment of man's fellows that could not but grow from such realization: justice to all, kindness because of love. To Micah's clear vision, Hezekiah's religious reforms were a good beginning. Micah and Isaiah did not censor their king as Amos and Hosea censored the kings of Israel. Hezekiah had done a good part, but Micah

knew that to Judah could come no redemption, no divinely appointed security, until the nation's religion extended to thorough social reform.

Micah was a practical man, good at anticipating reality. He made practical suggestions for such reform. Judah must achieve an honest judiciary, honest and intelligent leadership, both civic and religious. Judah must see to what shrewd and immoral business methods would lead, and must abolish them. Judah must readjust its religious ideals, turning from reliance on ritual, pointing up honest relationship between God and man, between man and man.

To Micah, as to the other prophets of his age, the inevitably tragic future of the nation was a part of Jehovah's plan. He was, however, apparently less interested in the inter-capital intrigue than in the sin that came from the politicians and their associates. Hosea and Isaiah cried repeatedly that these intrigues were useless. Micah characteristically passed them over, accepting their existence, and going on from there. He had seen, perhaps, Israel because of sin scattered among the heathen. Judah too, he said, would go that way. Assyria would come over the highway between Asia and Africa, turning perhaps from her war on Babylon; through Judah's southern gate at Lachish,[18] through Moresheth and the towns around Moresheth, on to Jerusalem. Babylon in time would come too—Micah and Isaiah agreed on Babylon—and Jerusalem would one day fall; then Judeans, God's chosen who had lost their way, would live as captives in Babylon.

[18]Isaiah designated, less logically, the northern gate.

Assyria and Babylon were heathen nations, each walking under his own god; but they were to become God's instruments of cleansing Judah of her sin: her cities and strongholds built on blood and iniquity; her desecrated worship with its witchcrafts and soothsayers, its graven images, its pillars and Asherim. From captivity Micah promised, as Isaiah did, Jehovah could and would redeem a remnant of Judah, such as would come to know him. They would, in that day, be free of bondage, would pass through the gate of their shame, the king before them, and "Jehovah at the head of them." Of this remnant would come a power, under the leadership of a Man, that would beat into pieces the enemies of Jehovah and devote their gain and their substance to his kingdom.[19] This would be a kingdom of peace, the nations' swords beaten into plowshares, the spears into pruning hooks; and the reason that it could be a kingdom of peace lay in the ruler: "This man shall be our peace." His rule would rest on the people's learning his ways so that they might walk in his paths, on his leading the people to love justice and kindness, to the end that to each man would pertain righteous security: ". . . for out of Zion shall go forth the law." In that day Judah would not live to herself: those nations that in Micah's time walked each in the name of a different god would, then, turn from those gods to stand with the faithful of Judah and Israel "in the name of Jehovah our God for ever."

Thus Micah comes to the fulfilment of the promise given to Abraham, "in thee shall all the families of the

---

[19]Compare Isaiah 23:18; 60:9.

earth be blessed";[20] to Jacob, who for all his chicaneries grew to be Israel, "in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed";[21] to David, who for all his grossness clung honestly to Jehovah's will, ". . . thy house and thy kingdom shall be made sure forever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever."[22]

THE PROPHET MICAH

From the evidence of Micah's eloquent style and his powerful message, what can be known about him? This study has shown that he was versed in the history of his country, probably of his world; that he knew literary conventions and the content of existing Hebraic literature. His education along those lines, at least, had been thorough. He was from the Sh^{e}phēlāh and knew that country geographically, economically, intimately. He records a good deal about country life: the cries of the jackal and the ostrich, the menace of the lion to the flocks, and the protection of the shepherd to them, ". . . he shall stand, and shall feed his flock"; he had seen serpents in the dust and crawling things come from their close places. He seems to have known planting and reaping, how oil was trodden from olives, and vineyard walls. He spoke of the reviving dew and of showers on the grass, of the first succulent ripe figs and of the dried summer fruits, the grape gleanings, not clustered. He had great interest, certainly, in the life of the people of the Sh^{e}phēlāh, in their problems, their poverty, and the reason for their

[20]Gen. 12:3.
[21]Gen. 23:18.
[22]2 Sam. 7:12-17.

poverty. The figure of the preparation of meat in 3:2-3 shows knowledge of the methods to be used in obtaining from meat the most value, and is as savage a figure of speech as is in all literature.

Interesting is the fact that Micah never blames the people for their straits. He never says to them "You were lazy and failed to cultivate your land; so you lost it," or "You were stupid in handling your flocks and herds, so you have none," or "If you had husbanded your resources, you would not now be in need." The fact that the people have lost their hereditary lands, and so the source of their living, he lays on the shoulders of the powerful. Here, along with the art of his style, stands evidence that Micah was not a simple country prophet. Micah knew the malice and the evil and the acquisitiveness of the cities, of the policy makers in the capitals. The country people had been helpless before economic lawlessness, and this Micah told to all the nation. They had been depleted in number by wars foisted on them by the nervous short-sightedness of the lawless capital. They had been taxed to pay for these wars. They had lost their herds and flocks, their food crops to invaders. They had, so exhausted, been cheated with well-thought-through cheating, with wickedly contrived short-dealings. They had been set an example of vicious religious practices. This generation, and probably other generations since Jehoshaphat's missions,[23] had perhaps not been taught Jehovah's law wholly; perhaps had never heard of the Year of the Release, of the Jubilee Year. The pow-

[23] 2 Chron. 17:7-9.

erful would not like a Year of Release, during which they grew nothing for export or war or personal luxury, during which they canceled debts and freed slaves; this generation of the powerful would certainly not be conscious of the economical equity deponent on the Year of the Jubilee. This cavalier attitude was ignoring God's law, in spite of his early warning, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it";[24] this was lawlessness, and the poor of Judah were its victims. There can be no doubt that Micah knew the temper of the capital as intimately as he knew the details of country life; he must have known other Judean cities too, for he speaks of the mire of city streets, the strongholds of their defense; and in all of them he found little that was wholesome or honest.

What he knew of foreign countries is hard to estimate. He observantly placed the boundaries of his world at the Egyptian cities on the west and the Euphrates on the east; between sea and sea, the Mediterranean west, and probably the Persian Gulf or the Dead Sea east; between mountain and mountain, Lebanon in the north and Sinai in Arabia or Seir in the Edomite range to the south. He must have known Samaria nearly as well as Jerusalem; Israel, as Judah. He knew the good grazing afforded flocks and herds in Bashan and Gilead across the Jordan. He had certainly seen an earthquake, or had been in some country soon after an earthquake, perhaps a coastal city, perhaps even the Houranian Manasseh. He used the safety and well-being of the flocks of Bozrah,

---

[24]Deut. 4:2.

which lay in either Moab or Edom, to illustrate the future condition of Jehovah's faithful. If he had journeyed to either country, he had passed across the Salt Sea or through the Wilderness of Zin or Paran. He spoke of Assyria and of Babylon only as enemy aggressors, but he knew something of their religions and of their early joint history; he may have known Egypt's cities; the bald eagle of 1:16 is the griffon vulture of Syria and Egypt.

So much, then, can be known of him: his closeness to Judah, city and country, powerful and humble; his education; his casual reach into the world outside his nation; his practical penetrating mind, his ability to see through calamity to truth. And one thing more should be noted about the prophet Micah. He was sure of his relationship with Jehovah, and sure of his mission. Not for him any teaching for hire, any divining for money; not for him any prostitution of the gift of Jehovah's spirit to any material need. Nor for him, ever, any shame because of his message. He stated all this in his simple, beautiful manner between two passages on the unworthiness of Judah's leadership, "But as for me," he said, "I am full of power by the spirit of Jehovah, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin."

Judah and Israel did not forget Micah: his fearlessness, the effort he added to King Hezekiah's effort to teach Judah the essence of religion, even the detail of his message. A century and a half later certain elders defended the Prophet Jeremiah, and added a little to what is known about Micah when they argued before the assembly of the people: "Micah the Morashtite prophesied

in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah; and he spoke to all the people of Judah, saying, thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Zion shall be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest.—Did Hezekiah . . . and all Judah put him to death? Did he not fear Jehovah and entreat the favor of Jehovah, and Jehovah repented him of the evil he had pronounced against them?"[25]

After more centuries yet, and long captivities, Judah still remembered Micah. When Herod, troubled and inquiring, asked of the chief priests and scribes of the people the identity of the birthplace of one to be born King of the Jews, they told him instantly:

> In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written through the prophet,
>
> And thou, Bethlehem, land of Judah,
> Art in no wise least among the princes of Judah:
> For out of thee shall come forth a governor,
> Who shall be shepherd of my people Israel.[26]

---

[25]Jer. 26:18-19.

[26]Matt. 2:5-6. See also John 7:42.

IV

MICAH'S PROPHECY: SECTION I

"I will surely gather the remnant of Israel.'"(2:12)

THE FIRST PART

Micah's prophecy begins with a call to the peoples of the earth[1] to stand and to listen, with interest, with mental and spiritual perception, and with a view to obedience, to God's word. The peoples, and the context points especially to the chosen peoples of Judah and Israel, are to listen because they are in danger. The Lord Jehovah, the Lord enthroned over the Universe, has found the people wanting, and is coming from His holy temple, his place separated from the sin of the world, to witness against them.

> Hear, ye peoples, all of you; hearken, O earth, and all that therein is: and let the Lord Jehovah be witness against you, the Lord from His holy temple. (1:2)

Jehovah, who could approach man gently and graciously, approaches now in terrible majesty. The verb used to describe his issuing from his place is in the participle, denoting continuous action, the continuous out-

---

[1]Compare Isa. 1:2, Deut. 32:1. Remember that the opening sentence repeats Micaiah's closing words to Ahab. See p. 82, Chapter III.

going of holiness to judge sinners and their sin. Even the insensate earth responds to Jehovah's coming in his holiness and his judgment,

> For, behold, Jehovah cometh forth out of his place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth.[2]
>
> And the mountains shall be melted under him, and the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire, as waters that are poured down a steep place.[3] (1:3, 4)

For what sin is this constant, divine witnessing against the peoples?

> For the transgression of Jacob is all this, and for the sins of the house of Israel. (1:5)

The word for *transgression* here means literally breaking away, and the word for *sins* means missing the mark when shooting at a target. Jacob has broken away from Jehovah; Israel has shot at a target which Jehovah had set up, and has missed.

Then Micah, ever direct, sets out the basic sin of Jehovah's people, the sin that violated the first, the fundamental, commandment, the sin of idolatry; and he goes beyond that statement of fact to accuse the capital cities, the policy-makers, the influential leaders, of being responsible for this sin in the land. Micah asks and answers two sets of questions, putting the answer to the first question in the form of the second question of each set. The Hebrew construction of each answering question shows that the expected reply will be affirmative.

---

[2]This expression means here merely mountains, not the heathen shrines.

[3]Compare Judg. 5:4; Ps. 18:7; 68:2.

What is the transgression of Jacob? Is it not Samaria?

And what are the high places of Judah? Are they not Jerusalem? (1:5)

There is no mincing, no tactful side-stepping, here. The transgression of Jacob is that her rulers decree the worship of Jehovah in the form of a golden calf: "Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image." The sin of Judah is that the high places, the shrines of heathen gods flourish in and around Jerusalem: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Such is Jehovah's accusation.

His judgment follows: *Therefore* these capital cities will be utterly destroyed. First, Jehovah will ordain Samaria to destruction. Critics understand this passage to indicate that Micah wrote this part of his prophecy before the fall of Samaria to Sargon II, and point to the clarity with which he comprehends that inevitable, complete devastation. Omri had built Samaria on a hill, and had designed it to withstand offensive action. It did, in its last extremity, hold out against Assyria for three years; but it could not be invincible because Jehovah was witnessing against Samaria, and Assyria was the rod of his anger.[4]

Therefore I will make Samaria as a heap of the field, and as places for planting vineyards;

and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will uncover the foundations thereof. (1:6)

With this devastation will come the destruction of the material evidence of Israel's sin:

---

[4]Isa. 10:5.

> And all her graven images shall be beaten to pieces, and all her hires shall be burned with [in] fire, and all her idols will I lay desolate. (1:7)

Here, in the word *hires* Micah turns to the Deuteronomic conception, old, but so recently and so unforgettably stated to Israel by Hosea, of the figure of adultery. The nation, breaking its covenant with Jehovah, was adulterous. Since the primary reason for worshiping other gods was the acquisition of material well-being, assurance of food crops, fecundity among flocks and herds, safety against enemies, luxurious living, accumulated wealth, this adultery was also harlotry. Israelites broke away from Jehovah for hire. And yet, conversely, Israel claimed Jehovah as God, depended on Jehovah's strength for security, brought to Jehovah's worship as offering the hire of her harlotry. The idolatrous civilization of Samaria was founded, Micah shows, on the sin of religious harlotry. Jehovah will destroy it, and will return the fragments thereof to its original usage. This civilization, this worship, will fall before frankly idolatrous peoples and worship. The prophet's words are unequivocal:

> . . . for of the hire of a harlot hath she gathered them, and unto the hire of a harlot shall they return. (1:7)

THE INTERRUPTION: MOURNING

So much for Samaria. Micah now turns to his own country, to his beloved Judah. Elisha, it is remembered, wept when he gave Hazael the divine message of his future kingship over Syria[5] because he realized the horror

---

[5] 2 Kings 8:11-12.

Hazael as king would wreak on Israel. Micah, in his turn, looking on the certain ruin of Israel, looking on the present sin of Judah, weeps for his country, knowing that to Judah must come, under Jehovah's holy judgment, ruin like Israel's. The verbs in this statement of grief are cohortative, expressing intensity of feeling:

> For this [on this account, for the reason to follow] will I lament and wail; I will go stripped and naked;[6] I will make a wailing like the jackals, and a lamentation like the ostriches:
>
> For her [Israel's] wounds are incurable; for it [Israel's sin] is come even unto Judah; it reacheth unto the gate[7] of my people, even to Jerusalem. (1: 8, 9)

This statement Micah follows with the passage so well known for a brilliant play on words. It is a passage of mourning, and it must have been tremendously effective when Micah spoke it. Beginning with a quotation from David's song, "Tell it not in Gath," and ending with mention of the cave of Adullum, where David hid from Saul, Micah runs through a list of twelve Judean places which must share Jehovah's punishment, as they share Samaria's sin and Jerusalem's sin. Six he names in lamentation, six in judgment. The overall effect is that of saying in our country, "Do not let our neighboring enemies know, but war and ruin will ravage our nation from our southern gateway to our capital; there will be fighting

---

[6]Keil-Delitzsch say this costume is that of a prisoner, not a mourner. The very forms *stripped* and *naked* indicate plundered and spoiled. This garb, these critics say, demonstrates not only Micah's sorrow but the fate of his countrymen.

[7]The place of judgment; the entrance.

in Concord, collapse in Independence, bitterness in Sweetwater, devils in Los Angeles. Moveover, the ravaging will fall heavily on the women;[8] they will flee the enemy, those who can, in chariots drawn by swift horses, bearing with them warning that an invading army follows; some will not be able to get away, and these will go stripped and naked into captivity."

Micah's passage, with the significance of the place names bracketed runs thus:

> Tell it not in Gath[9] [News Town or annunciation], weep not at all:
> at Beth-le-aphrah [Dust House] have I rolled myself in the dust.[10]
> Pass away, O inhabitant [woman] of Shaphir [Ornament City or Fairview], in nakedness and shame:
> The inhabitant [woman] of Zaanan [Departure or "Outlet"][11] is not come forth [has not departed],
> The wailing of Beth-ezel [Neighboring-Town or House of Separation] shall take from you the stay thereof.[12]
> For the inhabitant [woman] of Maroth [Bitter Woe or Bitterness] waiteth anxiously for good, be-

---

[8]The Hebrew constructions throughout this passage are feminine; notice, beginning here, Micah's concern for the women of his country.

[9]Gath and Beth-Le-Aphrah were foreign towns: Gath in Philistia; Beth-Le-Aphrah probably in unoccupied Canaan, or possibly in Benjamin of Judah.

[10]A Semitic celebration of grief.

[11]Perhaps the Zenan of Josh. 35:37.

[12]That is, Beth-ezel, also ravaged, can furnish no refuge to those fleeing from near-by towns. This may be the Azel of Zech. 14:5, at the foot of Mt. Olivet, which did furnish sanctuary to those fleeing the great earthquake of King Uzziah's reign.

cause evil is come down from Jehovah unto the gate of Jerusalem.

Bind the chariot to the swift steed, O inhabitant [woman] of Lachish [Race City or Horse Town]: she [Lachish] was the beginning of sin to the daughter of Zion;[13]
for the transgressions of Israel were found in thee [Lachish or perhaps Jerusalem].

Therefore shalt thou [Daughter of Zion, Jerusalem] give a parting gift[14] to Moresheth-Gath [betrothed of Gath]:

The houses of Achzib [lying fountain or place of deceit] shall be a deceitful thing unto the kings of Israel.[15]

I will yet bring unto thee, O inhabitant [woman] of Mareshah [Conquest Town or Possession or Hereditary City], him that shall possess thee:

the glory [the nobility] of Israel shall come unto Adullam.[16] (1:10-15)

Only Jerusalem, warns Micah, may escape this horror and pillage.

Make thee [Daughter of Zion] bald, and cut off

---

[13]Lachish was a border city, "the gate" to Southern Judah on the inter-continental highway. Through this gate would pass those who brought idolatry to Jerusalem. Perhaps there was calf-worship in Lachish, though there is no record of such.

[14]A dowry, or perhaps a divorce, from Jerusalem to Moresheth, which has followed the pattern of idolatry set in the capital to such extent that it is now betrothed in idolatry to the heathen city. This is Micah's town.

[15]The Israelite monarchy, the kings of Judah. The king will depend on the fortifications of this city, but they will fail him, just as a brook fails those who depend on it during dry weather.

[16]A country pitted with caves. The nobility will hide there, as David did. 1 Sam. 22: 1f.

thy hair[17] for the children of thy delight: enlarge thy baldness as the eagle; for they are gone into captivity from thee. (1:16)

It must be remembered that Assyria did ravage Judah under Hezekiah to the walls of Jerusalem. At least once Sennacherib shut the king inside his capital as, he said, a bird in a cage, while he held the outlying places captive. He once sent Hezekiah a demand from Lachish. In this grim prophecy, Micah may remind the people of these depredations, or he may predict them. Jerusalem, the Daughter of Zion, is still uncaptured, but is bereft of her supporting cities, the children of her delight, a city alone in a land occupied by a powerful enemy. On this grim note, the prophet ends the first part of his prophecy. He has repeated two themes: accusation, judgment; sin, ruin; idolatry, devastation.

THE SECOND PART

The second part of this first division of Micah's prophecy follows in the main the pattern of the first. Again the prophet begins with an accusation. This time it speaks of social sin, such sin as inevitably follows breaking away from God; this sin is of lawless violation of the rights of the unfortunate by the fortunate.

Woe to them that devise iniquity and work evil upon their beds! When the morning is light, they

[17]Num. 6:9; Deut. 14:1 forbids Hebrews to make baldness "between the eyes for the dead," which seems to have been a heathen symbol of mourning. Perhaps Micah indicated here that Jerusalem is gone so far into heathen practise that even her mourning follows that pattern. On the other hand, perhaps shaving the head was not the same as making baldness between the eyes.

practise it, because it is in the power of their hands.[18] (2:1)

The grammatical structure of this sentence begins with two participles and changes to imperfects. The participles indicate that those who are able, in whose hands the power is gathered, continuously devise iniquity and repeatedly work evil. The day is not long enough for their depredation; they use the night for planning, and always as soon as morning comes they put their plans to work.

Just as in the first part of this section, Micah came from a somewhat general accusation to specific sin, he turns now from his charge of constant lawlessness to name the sin. These powerful ones break the tenth commandment, and they break the law of the hereditary ownership of land:

> And they covet fields, and seize them; and houses, and take them away; and they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage. (2:2)

There is the sin, the economic sin of repeated theft, of continuously taking from the people their means of living. Greedy and blind, these rich did not recognize that nothing renders a nation so helpless and brings to it more confusion than for the people to be without the means of earning, without homes.[19] *Therefore,* says Micah, looking at this specific sin, Jehovah will act in judgment. The passage indicates that his action will be planned

---

[18]Literally, "for their hand is for a god"; they know no higher god, or good, than the ability to accomplish their desires.

[19]Read Oliver Goldsmith, *The Deserted Village;* and William Langland, *Piers Plowman.* This last sets out economic conditions and oppressions very like those that existed in Judah and Israel in Micah's time.

and constant: Jehovah will do continuously to these lawless ones what they are doing continuously to those whom they oppress. Those high-headed, haughty oppressors will go into captivity, linked perhaps to each other, neck to neck, as captives were, by the halters of defeat. Micah had, no doubt, seen such strings of captives, so linked, on the highway below Moresheth-Gath. This humbling will come to them because the time they created, planned, thought out, while it seemed prosperous to them, was innately evil.

When these go into captivity, those who watch will "lift upon them a parable," will in effect say, "Well, I told you so," or they will weep with broken hearts because the end has come in Samaria and in Judah for the people of the Covenant.

> *Therefore,* thus saith Jehovah, Behold against this family[20] do I devise an evil, from which ye shall not remove your necks; neither shall ye walk haughtily;[21] for it is an evil time.
>
> In that day [of defeat] shall they [those who watch] take up a parable against you, and lament with doleful lamentation, and say, We are utterly ruined: he changeth the portion of my people: how doth he remove it [that portion] from me! to the rebellious[22] he divideth our fields.—*Therefore*[23] thou

---

[20]This nation.

[21]See Ex. 32:10 and Deut. 9:13-14. Once Jehovah, considering the pride and insolence of the people, would destroy them and create through Moses alone a chosen people, but was dissuaded by Moses.

[22]Those heathen nations who have rebelled against Israel's occupation of Canaan.

[23]This is a shift from plural to singular, seeming to emphasize that the coming judgment will affect every single descendent of Jacob. A similar shift in 3:10 seems to be for like emphasis.

shalt have none that shall cast the line by lot in the assembly of Jehovah. (2:3-5)

This mourning speech by those who mourn the fate of the Israelite nations reverts, in Micah's exquisite ordering, to the law of hereditary land, the law the powerful were, even as the prophet spoke, ruthlessly violating. Jehovah had given the nation a land [a portion], and he is now taking it away, returning it to the heathen. There will be in this land no more Assemblies of Jehovah, no Years of Release, no Jubilee Years, in which Israelites can remember Jehovah's provisions and reestablish the old allotments of hereditary lands, no more great Passovers such as the people had so eagerly observed under Hezekiah. Indeed, there will be no people of the promise left in the land of the promise. In the national phase of Jehovah's great plan for them, they will have no more portion, because they have broken away from him and from their covenant with him. It is a difficult but remarkable passage; and Micah knew its tragic import, the utter ruin it foretold, would bring protest from those who listened.

THE INTERRUPTION: PROTEST AND ANSWER

So here again, as in the first division, where the prophet interposed his grief, Micah puts an interruption. This he gives the form of a dialogue between himself speaking for himself, or for Jehovah, and the sycophant, comfortable prophets, who were maintained by the powerful. These would be distressed if their patrons were distressed; so Micah takes the war directly to them. The dialogue runs so:

The sycophant prophets: Prophesy ye not,[24] thus they [the sycophants] prophesy: reproaches shall not depart [shall not continue].

Micah: "Shall it be said, O house of Jacob, Is the spirit of Jehovah straitened? are these [the violations of the law] his doings? (2:6, 7)

Reasonably Micah continues his lesson: Jehovah had warned Israel not to amend his law, but strictly to follow his law; and Jehovah's spirit is not a changing, weakened spirit. Jehovah had set down beneficent laws; he had warned of the consequences if they were broken. If disaster come, the people and not Jehovah are responsible for it. These two questions are so cast in the Hebrew that the answer expected is negative. What the nation must suffer is only in just accord with what Jehovah had from the beginning promised.

Micah [speaking now as Jehovah, reminding Judah and Israel of Jehovah's goodness to the upright and contrasting with that condition the vicious economic present]: Do not my [Jehovah's] words do good to him that walketh uprightly? But of late[25] my people is risen up as an enemy:[26]

Ye strip the robe [27] from off the garment from them that pass by securely as men averse from war. (2:7-8)

This accusation seems to be that the sin of the great extends even to petty theft; they steal from unsuspecting wayfarers, who are peaceably going about their business (averse from war); or perhaps even from those men who

---

[24]Compare Isa. 10:8-11; Hos. 4:5; Amos 2:12; 7:16.

[25]Only yesterday; right now.

[26]To Jehovah, and to the nation itself.

[27]The outer cloak.

have fought in the nation's war and have returned expecting peace and economic security as their due.

> *Micah* [continuing to speak as Jehovah]: The women [wives, widows] of my people ye cast out from their pleasant houses; from their young children [sucklings] ye take away my glory forever. (2:9)

This is even more abominable sin; it is sin against the helpless. Women are deprived of the protection of their homes by the powerful who covet those homes, and when there has been enough of that sort of sin in Israel and Judah the glory of citizenship in the Promised Land will be gone from every living generation and from generations yet to be born. This ends the dialogue, most of which has been Micah's or Jehovah's through Micah.

The prophet now turns in his answer to the warning that the people of the promise, through their own sin, will no longer inherit the right "to cast the line by lot in the assembly of Jehovah." He says to them,

> Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your resting place; *because of uncleanness that destroyeth,* even with a grievous destruction.[28] (2:10)

Their moral uncleanness is such, indeed, that they will accept religion only as religion confirms and condones it. Micah closes his interruption with this reminder, and it must have stung awake those resentful persons who had argued that his reproaches should not continue. The people are unclean with an uncleanness that has destroyed a nation, that can destroy another nation; and their uncleanness has rendered them religiously insensate: what they demand of religious service is falsehood.

---

[28]Lev. 18:25-28; Deut. 12:9-10.

If a man walking in a spirit[29] of falsehood do lie, saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and strong drink;[30] he shall even be the prophet of this people. (2:11)

THE PROMISE

Micah, after so much of direct accusation, so much of bitter inescapable judgment, turns now to promise. Some critics, notably Orelli, count this promise as that of those prophets, who, speaking in the spirit of wine and strong drink, that is, of sensual pleasures, eagerly hold a false promise to the wicked. These critics set against the possibility that the promise is Jehovah's given through Micah the argument that it includes first "all of Jacob" and only secondly the faithful remnant; and that it is not properly introduced as Jehovah's.

Abrupt shifts were not, however, rare in Micah,[31] a fact which will be easily seen in the third section of his prophecy; and this is not a false promise. It is not the kind of promise a sycophant would give. It includes not only the breaking of bonds but the captivity in bonds. It does not say, "Oh, this nation is having a little trouble; but this nation is Jehovah's, and so no real harm can touch its economic system." It says, "This nation will come to bonds, but a remnant of it, a remnant of faithful from every tribe, with Jehovah's help can break them." This is the comfort for the faithful of Jehovah; the assurance to them that, though Israel and Jacob have broken

---

[29]The wind.

[30]Micah's only reference to drunkenness among prophets and priests. See Isa. 5:11, 22; 28:7; 56:12; Hos. 4:11.

[31]See similar shifts in Hos. 2:2, 6:1, 9:9.

the Covenant, there is yet a way in which Jehovah can keep his primary promise to them: when they break the bonds of captor sin, a king of their people under Jehovah can lead them to be a blessing to all the families of the earth.

Not all of them will break the bonds, only a remnant. The idea of the remnant was not new to Micah. Hosea had not had it; he had seen only both Israelite kingdoms united under a king of the line of David. Amos did not have it. Joel did have it, and expressed it even more clearly than did Micah and Isaiah, in whose prophecies it is a basic conception. Joel's explanation runs ". . . *whosoever shall call on the name of Jehovah* shall be delivered; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those that escape, as Jehovah hath said, and among the *remnant* those whom Jehovah doth call."[1]

After accusation and judgment, the faithful of Jehovah needed, and deserved, promise. For their nation's sins, they, with the wicked, would suffer displacement from the land, would trudge the dark, tired road of captivity; but for them was a promise to brighten the way. It was as much the duty of Micah as Jehovah's prophet to give that promise as it was to proclaim the sin and to warn of the judgment. The "all of thee," it seems clear from the following qualifying phrase, points not to all the people of Israel and Judah, but to all the faithful from all the tribes, some of whom were, it is remembered, already in captivity before Samaria fell. The emphasis in the passage lies on the *assembling*. From these faithful,

---

[1]Joel 2:32.

the divine promise runs, will in time grow again a great people, a multitude.[1] The promise is a pastoral, peaceful and beautifully climactic:

> I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee;
> I will surely gather the remnant of Israel;
> I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah,
> as a flock in the midst of their pasture;
> they shall make a great noise by reason of the multitude of men.
>
> The breaker [the Leader, the Deliverer] is gone up before them: they have broken forth and passed on to the gate, and are gone out thereat;
> and their king is passed on before them,
> and Jehovah at the head of them. (2:12, 13)

[33]Hos. 1:10-11.

V

MICAH'S PROPHECY: THE SECOND SECTION

"And this man shall be our peace." (5:5)

The second section of Micah's prophecy follows the pattern set by the first. There are again repeated accusations and judgments, broken by an interruption, and there is promise. Where in the first section, however, the greater development was in accusation and judgment, in this it is in promise. The whole section furnishes a study in leadership. The leaders of Judah are accused of deliberately planned, ruthless, continued sin, all types of rulers except the king being included: heads of the house of Jacob, "rulers," judges, prophets, priests. These are accused and judged, the devastation of the judgment for their sin[1] enveloping at last the nation: Against ruin wrought by such leadership Micah sets as contrast the spiritual kingdom under "this man" who shall be to Judah "our peace": the joy and righteousness of that kingdom, its influence, its ruler, its development.

THE FIRST PART

The first part of this section is cast in three strophes of four verses each, and the thought is balanced between

---

[1]". . . for your sake."

accusation and judgment except for the interruption that comes at the end of the second strophe.

The first strophe begins with the prophetic call to hear with understanding the message Micah has from Jehovah, so as to heed it. The thought following the introduction seems to revert to the woe pronounced in the first section on those in whose hands the power lay. The heads of Jacob here are the princes of the tribes and the heads of families in the tribes, upon whom the knowledge and the execution of Jehovah's law were requisite. Micah reminds them, "Is it not for you to know right?" The form of his question indicates that without any doubt Jehovah expected the leaders of his people to have legal and religious knowledge that would manifest itself in administration, in action.[2] Instead, what? Their dispositions nullify any such possibility. These men show by their actions that they hate good and love evil; they are basically, constantly corrupt. They exploit the people, whose welfare Jehovah had made their trust, with all the savagery of the worst of those people who had never known Jehovah. So, as with the powerful of the first section, Jehovah will visit on them judgment like their sin. How have they answered the need of those dependent on them for knowledge, for help? They have reduced them, even their very lives, to the accomplishment of their own sensual desires; and, the Hebrew shows, this sin has not been a growth but the result of deliberate, evil

[2]The Mosaic requirements: Deut. 17:14-20, 31:9-13, 24ff, 32: 1-47.

choice.[3] When such people are themselves in need, Jehovah will hide his face from them,[4] will never heed their call, will furnish them in their extremity no help.

> And I said, Hear I pray you,[5] ye heads of Jacob, and rulers of the house of Israel: is it not for you to know justice?
>
> Ye who hate the good and love the evil;
>
> who pluck off their [the humble's] skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones;
>
> who also eat the flesh of my people, and flay the skin from off them, and break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron.
>
> Then [at the time of the captivity foretold in Section I] shall they [the unjust] cry unto Jehovah, but he shall not answer them; yea, he will hide his face from them at that time,
>
> *according as they have wrought evil in their doings.* (3:1-4)

The second strophe turns again to the sycophant prophets of Section I. These are men like the prophets of Ahab who promised victory when death was in store. These are men who ally themselves with the powerful for the sake of their own material benefit. Because the people depend on them for spiritual guidance and listen to their pronouncements, their very falseness leads the humble to a certain acceptance of sin in the mighty. Without the

---

[3]The verb in the last of 3:4 is in the perfect, showing completed action. For illustration see William Shakespeare: Richard III's Soliloquy, *Henry VI,* Part III, V, 6, 61ff, and Iago's soliloquy, *Othello,* I, 1, 41-65.

[4]See Hos. 5:6.

[5]This is Micah's pleading *for the people.* It takes away some of the sharpness, emphasizes the prophet's love and solicitude.

support of the respected institution of prophecy the powerful would needs be more circumspect in their depredations. In addition, Micah charges, against any man who preaches truth instead of gainsaying, who asks of political and economic leaders justice and righteousness in their transactions with the people, who thus disturbs the easy comfort these sycophants have won for themselves; against him they will close their ranks and seek discredit among the people.[6] This is the treatment haughty Amaziah gave Amos,[7] and it is what Micah expects. To sanctify (separate) a holy war against the enemies of Jehovah was a regular prophetic formula. This charge is that of the pernicious abuse of a righteous custom.[8]

The time will come inevitably, however, when their false prophecies will be shown false; and in that day of shame and fear, they, as did the political and economic leaders, will find that Jehovah does not hear them, gives them no answer. They, too, have forfeited to the fool's gold of transient material benefit the right to rely on him.

> Thus saith Jehovah concerning the *prophets that make my people to err:*
>
> that bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace;
>
> (and whoso putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him):
>
> *Therefore* it shall be night unto you, that ye shall have no vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine;

---

[6]Against him they will "declare a holy war."
[7]Amos 7:10-17.
[8]Joel 3:9 ff, Is. 13:3ff.

and the sun shall go down upon the prophets,
and the day shall be black over them.[9]
And the seers shall be put to shame,
and the diviners confounded;
Yea, they shall all cover their lips;[10] *for there is no answer of God.* (3:5-7)

THE INTERRUPTION

Here Micah interrupts: these are the prophets who have profaned their calling, whose visions have been not of Jehovah but only of their own pandering hearts; but Micah, as this study has already noted and as the reader cannot but sense, knows a surge of joy in his own ministry, and is not of them. He is filled with God's spirit, which activates him; he knows justice, and he has divine justice and truth to proclaim; further, he has the strength, the courage, the moral and physical manliness, for the task. He will not cry "Peace" to those who despoil the weak; he will not by example or teaching lead the people to err; he will plainly and unequivocably preach to the nation its sin and the results of its sin:

But as for me, I am full of power by the Spirit of Jehovah,
and of judgment, and of might,
to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin.[11] (3:8)

The last strophe returns to accusation of the leadership of Judah. Perhaps it is well to remark here, again, that this was on the surface a prosperous time in Micah's

---

[9]Amos 5:18; 8:9.
[10]Lev. 13:45.
[11]This reverts to the first accusation of Section I.

country. These politicians and leaders whom he called in judgment were prominent, respected citizens. These prophets and priests occupied, no doubt, the high, influential, luxurious religious positions; they were the clergy of the rich. The nation on the surface did not seem in great jeopardy. It had under Hezekiah re-opened the Temple, enjoyed the Great Passover, re-voiced its allegiance to Jehovah. It was to the respectable that Micah spoke with such penetrating sternness.

> Hear this [a statement to come later], I pray you,[12] ye heads of the house of Jacob, and rulers of the house of Israel, that abhor justice and pervert all equity. (3:9)

At this point, Micah shifts from second to third person, as if those to whom he spoke had turned away from further listening. The prophet describes their work: they have built Zion, where the royal houses stood, and Jerusalem. But how? By the mutilation and the blood of the people; by extortion from the people; by turning justice from the people; by perverting equity from the people; by leading to sin the people.

> They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. (3:10)

Now the prophet comes to the crux of the reason behind all this evil: it is greed, he says, supported by religious blindness. The judges judge for bribes. The priests, for whom Jehovah had ordained physical support to the end that they might devote their lives to holy duties, among which was teaching to the whole people

---

[12]This exhortation repeats the opening phrase of this section. The repetition furnishes summary and emphasis.

the whole law, teach now for hire. That is—what their patrons want them not to teach they do not teach; their divine mission is governed by what they can get of wealth and position for themselves. The prophets join with the priests to work with an eye on the reward for their work. If their consciences trouble them at all, they comfort themselves with the promise: they are of Jehovah's people; he will keep them. They in their religious expediency forget that the promise was based on the stipulation, "If ye keep my laws and walk in my way."

> The heads thereof[13] judge for reward,
> and the priests thereof teach for hire,
> and the prophets thereof divine for money:
> *Yet*[14] they lean upon Jehovah, and say, Is not Jehovah in the midst of us? no evil shall come upon us.[15] (3:11)

And the Judgment? These powerful, these ruthless, these sycophant, these complacent, will bring the nation to ruin. Even Jerusalem, when Jehovah turns finally away, will not be spared. What the respectables have built with the blood of the people and the iniquity of their transactions will become heaps and desolation.[16] The last verse of this strophe, returning to the second from the third person, is a climax of both accusation and judgment. The royal palaces, the royal city, will be destroyed; and, Jehovah having withdrawn his presence from the nation, the Temple, his house, will be destroyed. Even the mountain on which it stood will become just

---

[13]Zion and Jerusalem.
[14]"In spite of their sins."
[15]Compare Hos. 6.
[16]Compare Section I, Ch. 1:6-7.

another site for another heathen shrine, a "high place" in a forest; perhaps an Asherim will grow there. The intensity of the last sentence is startling:

> *Therefore,* shall Zion *for your sake*[17] be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house[18] as the high places of the forest. (3:12)

THE SECOND PART

Against this ruined kingdom, this destroyed Temple, and the evident despair of the prophet, Micah turns again, with quiet faith, to Promise: to a new kingdom which is to be built on the divine teachings that should have come always from the Temple at Jerusalem. Here Micah develops his great message of the spiritual kingdom which will replace the material kingdom the chosen people are through their sin to lose. He begins with the kingdom established in beneficent glory, and then turns to the steps by which it has developed. The first step is the redemption of the faithful from the captivity of sin, here symbolized by Babylon; the second is her victory over the powers of sin, here symbolized by warring nations; the third is acceptance of the person and the power of the King, who will come from the people, not from the powerful, from Bethlehem where David was born, not from Jerusalem where he ruled; and the fourth is support of the character of his rule, which destroys the sort of worship from which evil grows.[19]

---

[17]Because of your sin.

[18]Mt. Moriah, where the Temple stood.

[19]These divisions run: 4:1-8; 4:9-10; 4:11-5:1; 5:2-5a; 5:5b-15.

> But, [Micah begins, glad to draw a contrast, quiet again after the terrible climax of his prophecy that the *mountain of the house* should become "as the high places of a forest,"] in the latter days it shall come to pass that the *mountain of Jehovah's house* shall be established on the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills. (4:1)

This is the passage that Micah and Isaiah share almost word for word. Which of them wrote it first has not been established; indeed, whether it originated with either is a question. The fact that Joel[20] had used the same figures in a contrasting exhortation leads to the conclusion that the passage was known in Hebrew literature before Micah and Isaiah wrote. Micah in the first section of his prophecy used, it is remembered, brief quotations from earlier Hebrew history. It would be appropriate, and would perhaps give weight to his following argument, if he could develop here a conception based on an old and accepted quotation. It must be noticed, however, that the argument with which Micah follows the passage makes it more an intrinsic part of the whole than it is in Isaiah's sermon.

It is well to note here, perhaps, that this spiritual kingdom is to be situated on a great height, "on the top of the mountains," "exalted above the hills." This is not Mt. Moriah in Jerusalem. This is the holy, separated place of Section I from which Jehovah issues in judgment, treading on the mountains as he comes. The idea of elevations as the dwelling places of divinities is almost universal, and is so old that the motive behind the idea

---

[20]Isa. 2:2-4; Joel 3:10.

cannot be established. Perhaps it was inaccessibility, separateness; perhaps, that the skies seemed to touch the mountain tops; perhaps, that the sun and moon seemed to come from them or return to them. Moses, it must be remembered, talked to Jehovah in a cloud that covered the peak of Sinai, and when he came down his face shone so that the people could not look at him. His talks with Jehovah, face to face as a friend, took place on the mountain. Abraham, at God's command, took Isaac to a mountain *height* for sacrifice. The Temple at Jerusalem covered, with all its buildings, the eminence on which it was built; this was the "Mountain of God's house." Of course the fact that the original altars of the Baalim were on heights gave to such shrines, wherever located, the generic name of "high places." Balaam, it is recorded, offered sacrifices to Jehovah first at the "high place" of Baal, to which Jehovah would not come, and then on "bare heights," where Jehovah came to put a word in his mouth. Mesha made a "high place" for Chemosh; the clay coffin-vessels of Gezer were at the high place. The Phoenicians had, it is remembered, two deities[21] to which they had assigned a realm above. So, the very location of the new kingdom of which Micah spoke would indicate to all the world its holiness, its separateness from the sin of the world.

This is the kingdom which Judah and Israel can, with the help of Jehovah, finally attain. In addition, the expression "in the latter days" denotes among the proph-

---

[21]Baal-Hamon and Baal-Shamen. There is no record of images of these. They were probably solar deities.

ets a time apart from other time, the Messianic era.[22] The Hebrew word for "latter" has a root meaning of to tarry, to be behind, connoting behind the last.

So, having made plain the spiritual nature of this kingdom, the author of the passage, whether Micah or another, comes to the effect of a really righteous nation, such as Jehovah had intended his chosen people to be, on the whole world. The peoples, seeing the Kingdom really established,[23] and recognizing its permanence and virtue would seek its source:

> and peoples shall flow unto it.
> And many nations shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, and to the house of the God of Jacob. (4:1, 2)

The world has come, at last, to realize that such kingdom exists only because it is founded on those laws of righteousness, justice, and love which Jehovah has long ago given to his people Israel.

> and he [Jehovah] will teach[24] us of his ways,
> and we will walk in his paths.
> For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
> and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem;
> and he will judge between many peoples,
> and will decide concerning strong nations afar off. (4:1-3)

The result will be an end to the causes of war: to territorial ambitions, to spheres of influence, to industrial

---

[22]Hos. 3:5.

[23]The Hebrew construction indicates permanent establishment.

[24]This word means to cast a javelin or shoot an arrow: to point out. It is used *only* of all the teaching of Jehovah, especially of the teaching concerning the Messiah.

supremacy, to a man's coveting and seizing by trickery or by evilly gained power his neighbor's means to life, and to the exploitation of the weak by the strong. All this God's law has always taught; all this he will teach those who want to learn, not only by precept but by righteous, sovereign judgments. And the fruit of righteous government is not war. When nations know and accept the law and the judgment of Jehovah, peace will come to them:

> And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn[25] war any more.[26] (4:3)

Part of this peace will be, and here Micah again turns to quotation, material security. The historian of the *Books of Kings,* recording the security of national life under Solomon in his early reign wrote,[27] "And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree." Micah's promise runs:

> But [instead of learning war] they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree;
> and none shall make them afraid.[28] (4:4)

This is a meed which Jehovah has promised, and it is to be noted that the peoples of themselves cannot achieve it; what they can do is to turn sincerely to Jehovah, so that his omnipotence and faithfulness and love may achieve it through them. He has promised that when

---

[25]Learn the reasons for war, or the methods of war.

[26]This ends the quotation in Isaiah's sermon.

[27]I Kings 4:55. The Assyrian messenger to Hezekiah must have known this history. He quoted it. See 2 Kings 18:31 and Isa. 36:6.

[28]See Lev. 26:6 and Isa. 65:21-24.

a nation walks in his way that nation will prosper; and in such time those nations that have walked in the names of other gods will turn to him, in whose name[29] Judah and Israel will walk again. The idea here is a contrast between walking and walking eternally, between transience and permanence. God has promised good living and peace to the nations that walk in his strength forever:

> for the mouth of Jehovah of hosts hath spoken it.
> For all the peoples walk [now] every one in the name of his god;
> and we will walk in the name[30] of Jehovah our God forever and ever. (4:4, 5)

In this final glorious kingdom all that are faithful shall share, redeemed from the captivity of sin, typified by Babylon. These faithful are that remnant referred to in the promise at the end of Section I. Because they have traveled the road to captivity and, away from their own land, have lived the harsh lives of captives in far countries, they will come back to Jehovah limping and afflicted. Again, as in Section I, there is emphasis on the divine gathering, but here the greater emphasis is on the character of the "strong nation" which Jehovah will create out of these outcasts. It is a nation that will never again be dismembered or dispersed for its sins. It will endure, strong in dominion, its influence extending to the whole world "from henceforth even forever"; and all this will be possible because of the virtue of their leadership.

---

[29]The meaning is really *in whose strength.*
[30]In the strength.

In that day, saith Jehovah, will I assemble that which is lame,
and I will gather that which is driven away,
and that which I have afflicted;
and I will make of that which was lame a remnant,
and that which was cast far off a strong nation:
and Jehovah will reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth even for ever. (4:6, 7)

So far, in this promise of a spiritual kingdom, the ruler is simply the One who reigns, who judges, who teaches, in the House of Jehovah established on the top of the mountains. Now Micah points to that ruler as the Messiah, the scion of the Davidic line, the tower of the flock, the shepherd. To Migdal Eder, height of the daughter of Zion, the lost glory of the daughter of Jerusalem[31] shall come. That is, the Messianic Kingdom is promised in terms of the old Davidic line, since the Messiah in the flesh was to be of that lineage. With this passage comes a difference in style and rhythm, the difference continuing through the first verse of the fifth chapter, which in the Hebrew Bible is the last verse of the fourth chapter, and which seems in content as well as in form to belong to this development of Zion's eventual victory over the powers of sin. The passage, as has been said, promises the return of power to the Davidic mon-

[31]Migdal means tower; the daughter of Zion means the royal house on Zion; Migdal the great Tower, the look-out tower, among them. The daughter of Jerusalem is Zion. This is promise of returned glory to the inhabitants of the royal houses, therefore to the king of the line of David. The people who heard Micah would understand these references.

archy; it also reminds the people of its shepherd origin:

> And thou, O tower of the flock, the hill of the daughter of Zion,
> unto thee shall it come [shall it return],
> Yea, the former dominion shall come, the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem. (4:8)

The prophet turns now abruptly, as was his wont, to the steps Judah must take before she reaches this redemption, this kingdom, this king. The first is that she will endure captivity; such sin as now dominates Judah will send the nation, bound in the halters of sin, to Babylon.

> Now why dost thou cry aloud?
> Is there no king in thee,[32] is thy counsellor perished, that pangs have taken hold of thee as of a woman in travail?
> Be in pain, and labor to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail;
> for now shalt thou go forth out of the city [Jerusalem], and shalt dwell in the field, and shalt come even unto Babylon.[33] (4: 9, 10)

There is, as Hosea had already shown Israel,[34] no easy way back from the thought-patterns and the habits of sin. Deliverance cannot come to a people until they are in their characters ready to receive deliverance. In due time, after long cleansing that will also be suffering, some remnant of the whole will be ready, and these

---

[32]The loss of the King of Judah would be ruin to the nation, which relied on the glorious promises attached to the monarchy. One of the royal duties was that of Counsellor.

[33]Compare Isa. 39:6-7.

[34]Hos. 6:4-11.

Jehovah will rescue, snatch away from peril, and redeem,[35] deliver from bondage.

> there shalt thou be rescued; there will Jehovah redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies. (4:10)

After this redemption, freed from sin, this nation will triumph over the powers of sin. These are represented as predatory heathen nations, continuously wishing evil for Judah, continually intending to defile the nation and to gloat over the defilement.

> And now many nations are assembled against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye see our desire upon Zion. (4:11)

These would hope to show that nothing real lay in the fact that Jehovah had chosen this people; but their viciousness rests on ignorance. They have not understood Jehovah, realized the extent of his power or the variety of his resource, or valued him correctly. The destruction they desire to inflict on his people, God will enable Zion to inflict on them. The spirit of Jehovah triumphant will through his people destroy the heathen ideologies as oxen destroy with iron-tipped horns or as they tread corn from chaff under their brass-shod hoofs. This is Micah speaking Jehovah's words:

> But they know not the thoughts of Jehovah,
> neither understand they his counsel;
> for he hath gathered them as sheaves to the threshing floor.

---

[35]This word indicates redemption by purchase, as under the Mosaic law kinsman might buy back a person sold into slavery, or his hereditary land. The word points to the Redeemer as a kinsman.

Arise and thresh,[36] O daughter of Zion;
for I will make thy horn iron, and I will
make thy hoofs brass;
and thou shalt beat in pieces many peoples.[37]
(4:12, 13)

To what end? To the end that all their power, all their wealth they will devote to Jehovah when they have gone to his mountain and learned his ways.

and I will devote their gain unto Jehovah,
and their substance unto the Lord of the whole
earth.[38] (4:13)

In another abrupt change, Micah turns back to remind Judah that before the attainment of this triumph lies her captivity. This time he points to the near future, again reminding the nation that her sin cannot but bring her ruin; that between the prosperous, material, sinful present and the final spiritual victory of the redeemed nation Judah must face shame before a heathen enemy, and bitter insult.

Now shalt thou gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: he [the enemy] hath laid siege against us; they [the victorious enemy] shall smite the judge[39] of Israel with a rod upon the cheek. (5:1)

Until the time that the spiritual ruler will come, Jehovah, having hidden his face from the leaders, will give up Judah. No longer will he sustain in his name a

---

[36]Oxen threshed by treading the grain from the straw. See 1 Kings 22:11 and Isa. 41:15.

[37]See Joel 3; Isaiah 23:17-18.

[38]Amos 1 and 2.

[39]Notice the avoidance of the word king. Remember that a kingly duty was judgment. This striking was great insult.

material-minded, religiously haphazard nation. When, in time, these people have in their long captivity, perhaps abandoned their national hope, this king will come to them, born in Bethlehem. Like his forefather David, also born there, he will be a shepherd to his people; beyond his forefather David, he will be great to the ends of the earth, bringing such respect, such strength that when evil comes against his kingdom, even, to look ahead a bit, evil as powerful as that represented by the Assyrian armies, he will utterly defeat it. This is a proud promise; many Jews had heard the Assyrian envoy taunt the historic helplessness of tribal gods against his master's armies; many had seen tribute carried away to that king. Here again Micah speaks for Jehovah:

> But thou, Beth-lehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands[40] of Judah, out of thee shall One come forth unto me [Jehovah][41]
> that is to be ruler[42] in [over] Israel,[43]
> whose goings forth [whose origin] are from of old,
> from everlasting. (5:2)

This king is divine; he is not only a descendant of David, his origin is from ever-lasting; he had divine pre-exist-

---

[40]The districts, the greater divisions into which the tribes were divided: Num. 1:16, 10:4. Beth-lehem was in Judah, the hereditary home of Boaz. There he married Ruth, the Moabitess, who had renounced her god for Jehovah. Jesse was their grandson; David, their great-grandson. Christ was in the twenty-eighth generation from David. See Ruth 4:18-22; Matt. 1:1-17.

[41]This coming is part of God's plan. See 1 Sam. 16:1. Micah may here be referring to this passage, showing the typical relationship between David and the Messiah.

[42]Is destined to be ruler.

[43]The verbs *come forth* and *be ruler* indicate perpetual action.

ence. This is the Immanuel, the God-with-us. His power, his person will be to God's chosen, wandering people once again nationality; and, more than that, this divine ruler in his righteousness and his strength, which are also Jehovah's, will bring Peace, will *be* Peace.[44] With him that remnant (residue) of those who have been true to Jehovah will be united as brothers. This is the third step Judah and Israel must take to attain the Kingdom; they must accept this ruler, and become as close to him as to a brother. Among these he will stand as a shepherd[45] feeding his flock, and as a king in majesty; and with him they will abide powerful in their spiritual dominance to the ends of the earth, in Peace.

> Therefore will he [Jehovah] give them [Judah and Israel]up, until the time that she who travaileth hath brought forth: [until the Ruler is born] then the residue of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel. And he shall stand and shall feed his flock in the strength of Jehovah, in the majesty of the name of Jehovah his God:[46] and they shall abide;
>
> for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth.
>
> And this man shall be our Peace. (5:3-5)

Peace within the souls of men. Peace between man and man. Peace between nations. Peace between races. All this is based on peace with Jehovah through the leadership of "this man."

---

[44]Compare Isa. 9:5-6 and 11:1-9.

[45]Another reminder of David.

[46]The Hebrew constructions here denote repetition, practice, habit of life.

What of the character of his rule? And what of Judah's and Israel's attitude toward it? In the first place the rule will be sufficient for Peace. Even Assyria,[47] even Babylon[48] will be helpless before its strength. Further, the people will support it. They will be, this remnant of Jacob in brotherhood with the King, a part of the rule; dew for refreshing, showers for reviving, a lion against evil. Here is a marvelous prophecy; it will be help to those faithful who must for long centuries live captives:

> When the Assyrian shall come into our land, and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds and eight principal men.[49] And they shall waste the lands of Assyria with the sword, the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof; and he shall deliver us from the Assyrian when he cometh into our land and when he treadeth within our borders.[50]
>
> And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples
>
> as dew from Jehovah,
>
> as showers upon the grass, that tarry not for man, nor wait for the sons of men.[51]
>
> And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the nations, in the midst of many peoples,

---

[47]A better translation used Asshur, the name of the chief Assyrian god. Against God's powerful spiritual kingdom the most powerful god of the most powerful heathen nation cannot avail.

[48]Nimrod, the founder of Babylon; perhaps on his legend the chief Babylonian god Marduk, Bel, was built. Marduk was noted for his magic, was patron of magicians.

[49]For want of a better interpretation, critics agree that this means simply a force sufficient, both country men and civic leaders.

[50]Notice the refrain at the first and the last of this passage.

[51]That man cannot regulate.

> as a lion among the beasts of the forest,
> as a young lion among the flocks of sheep; who if he go through, treadeth down and teareth in pieces, and there is none to deliver.[52]
>
> Let thy hand be lifted up above thine adversaries, and let all thine enemies be cut off. (5:5-9)

And what were Israel's greatest enemies? They were not Assyria and Babylonia, Asshur or Nimrod, but those phases of their civilization which Judeans had let become more important to them than Jehovah and his "fiery law." These are chiefly the artificial means they have built to sustain the nation: the trade, the armaments, the fortresses, the cities of defense, and the heathen worship in all its varying abominations:

> And it shall come to pass in that day [the day of spiritual triumph, and of restoration] saith Jehovah, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and will destroy thy chariots: and I will cut off the cities of thy land, and will throw down all thy strongholds.[53]
>
> And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thy hand;[54] and thou shalt have no more soothsayers; and I will cut off thy graven images and thy pillars out of the midst of thee; and thou shalt no more worship the work of thy hands;[55] and I will pluck up thine Asherim out of the midst of thee; and I will destroy thy cities. (5:10-14)

The verbs in this section run, chiefly, in the imperfect

---

[52]The verbs throughout this passage denote continuance, progress, consummation.

[53]Isa. 2:7.

[54]This signifies some charms worked by hand.

[55]This prophecy has been accomplished. After the Babylonian exile Judah never again worshiped idols.

tense, denoting repeated action. This work, which Jehovah has outlined through Micah and of which God's people are a part, is the work of centuries, continuing as long as there is need for it.

The last sentence of this section of promise is a warning. Some nations, some people, may refuse to be a part of Jehovah's spiritual, righteous, peace-giving kingdom; may refuse to hear of it with the understanding that brings obedience. While some hear, some refuse to hear. Salvation is for those who do; judgment, for those who do not: judgment that is also vengeance in anger, so fierce that sin will not again hurt the Peace of the Kingdom under the leadership of the Shepherd of Jehovah. There is promise of inviolability, of perpetuity:

> And I will execute vengeance in anger and wrath upon the nations that hearkened[56] not. (5:15)

---

[56]That did not hear with a view to obedience. The word ties this final verse to the first verse of this section.

VI

MICAH'S PROPHECY: THIRD SECTION

"Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob" (7: 20)

In this last section of Micah's prophecy, the prophet returns to his teaching that there is no true understanding of the character of Jehovah, no true worship of him, among a people who do not live justly with their fellows. That is, the right relationship between God and man finds an outlet in the right relationship between man and man. That Judah and Israel have forgotten or ignored this truth is the sin of ingratitude for Jehovah's goodness to them, of resistance to his command; and it is a sin that will bring on the nation total ruin. Micah repeats here, also, his warning that only through realization of their sin and sincere repentance, can the people attain again their relationship with Jehovah and their part in his promised blessings.

THE FIRST QUESTION AND ANSWER

All this Micah sets out dramatically but plainly in the form of a lawsuit between Jehovah and the people, with the unchanging mountains and hills sitting as wit-

nesses, and with Micah as Jehovah's spokesman.[1]

> Hear ye now what Jehovah saith: Arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice. Hear, O ye mountains, Jehovah's controversy, and ye enduring foundations of the earth;[2] for Jehovah hath a controversy with his people, and he will contend with Israel. (6:1, 2)

This initial call is much like that of the first and the second sections; but here it is well to notice that there is expressed not only a call to heed and obey but the idea of continuity, perpetuity. The call of Jehovah to his witnesses and to sinners is perpetual through the ages.

The first plea Jehovah makes has two parts, both subdivided into two parts, both based on historical evidence of his goodness to his people. He asks that the people examine facts and find if Jehovah has failed in his promises to them, his goodness to them; or if they have failed him. This is a matchless psychological approach. Judah and Israel were proud of their history; they had recently reaffirmed their allegiance to Jehovah. He asks them for honest self-examination. There is no impatience in this question, only gracious, grave reminder.

> O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me.
> For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt,

---

[1]The idea of a lawsuit, or a conversation, to set out fundamental truths is in Mic. 2:5-12 and 6-7; Ps. 50:1-4; Isa. 1:2; 34; 63:1-6; Hos. 9. Some of these are unfinished; some are one-sided as in Mic. 2:5-12 and Isa. 63:1-6. The best developed are Hos. 9 and this lawsuit. Read in this connection Joshua's farewell address, Josh. 23:1-24:28.

[2]The idea is evidently that these do not change as nations and civilizations do.

and redeemed[3] thee out of the house of bondage.[4]
and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. (6:3, 4)

Two divine services are here: the service of deliverance, which the people could not of themselves accomplish, and of leadership, which Jehovah provided. From the people, not from the mighty,[5] Jehovah chose Moses and trained him for leadership. In a less degree, they being less devoted, he turned Moses's brother Aaron and his sister Miriam to the service of the whole. In the beginning, this passage says, when Jehovah chose and trained the leaders, the leadership was good.

The controversy continues, with Jehovah speaking:

O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab devised, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him; remember from Shittim unto Gilgal[6] that ye may know the righteous acts of Jehovah. (6: 5)

That is, the Balak-Balaam affair would illustrate to the people from their own knowledge of their history the righteousness, literally the straightness, the conformity to a standard, of Jehovah.

Judah and Israel, knowing this history, answer, seemingly with acknowledgement of Jehovah's goodness, just as almost universally they had answered Hezekiah's call to the restoration of the Temple, the Temple worship,

---

[3]Bought back with a price, literally.

[4]Deut. 7:8, 15:15.

[5]As with David.

[6]Shittim the last camping ground before the entrance into Canaan; Gilgal, the first camping ground after the entrance. Numbers 22:1, 25:1; Joshua 4:19-20, 5:9. It was during this time that Balak and Balaam were busy against the Hebrews.

and the celebration of the Passover. The people ask three questions about sacrifices. It should be noted here that they seem to believe that the offering of sacrifices is in itself a satisfactory propitiation for sin. They forgot that sacrifices were only meant to symbolize the self-surrender of man to God. Sacrifices had value only when they were in truth and in fact the outward manifestation of inner surrender. Judah and Israel have not yet learned what David saw so clearly and felt as keenly after his grievous sin, with Bath-Sheba, against Uriah:

> For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken spirit and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise (Ps. 51:16-17).

But if this state of genuine contrition does exist, David continues,

> Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering; then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar. (Ps. 51:19)

First repentance—then sacrifice. That is the order that God demands.

The tragedy in this trilogy of questions is that God's own people demonstrate that to them self-surrender connotes surrender of something owned, not of a life lived.[7] This lack of understanding was forgetfulness or ignorance of the provisions Jehovah had made that they might have such knowledge as would lead to understanding,[8] and it

---

[7]Hos. 4:19.

[8]Refer to Chapter II.

grew from their entanglement in heathen ideologies and customs.

The sacrifices the people suggest are burnt offerings, and rise to a hideous and pitiful climax: from quality, the best calves, the year-olds; to quantity, many rams, more oil than could be used in the sacrificial rites; to the heathen sacrifice of human life. The people speak:

> Wherewith[9] shall I come before Jehovah, and bow myself before the high God?
> shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves a year old?
> Will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
> shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? (6:6, 7)

How pitifully ignorant do God's people here reveal themselves of the law which He Himself had given them, and of His attitude toward wilful disregard of His laws! Were they totally unaware of God's command so clearly stated in Numbers 15:30-31?

> But the soul that doeth aught with a high hand, whether he be home-born or a sojourner, the same blasphemeth Jehovah; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people.

And surely, Judah and Israel had sinned "with a high hand"—consciously, knowingly, wilfully, blatantly, in cool and deliberate defiance of God. Micah names the sins: there were the "treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked . . . scant measure . . . wicked balances . . . bags of deceitful weights . . . rich men (thereof are) full

---

[9]In what?

of violence . . . lies . . . and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth." Do they now think that outward sacrifice will atone for that sin, in spite of the fact that God had said that "the soul that doeth aught with a high hand . . . shall be cut off from among his people"? For such a person a mere blood sacrifice had never been, under God's law, sufficient.

THE INTERRUPTION

It is here Micah interrupts, reminding the nation for Jehovah, and in words which might have been familiar to them from older Hebrew writings,[10] that religion is reasonable and spiritual. Extravagant sacrifice is not sufficient. They must return to a love of God and obedience to God's laws.

Micah's reminder is simple. All Israel knew, without question, historically, that Jehovah had shown his people "what is good." In detail and repeatedly he had given them spiritual guidance and moral laws, the following of which would lead to "good."

And what is this good? Micah sums it all up in three stipulations: do justice, love kindness, walk humbly with God. Clearly the first two are contingent on the third, and the three constitute Jehovah's ultimate requirement. Specifically, Micah's word for *require* here is in the participial form, demonstrating that this is God's perpetual, unchangeable requirement.

Just what then is implicit in walking humbly with God? Certainly a man, or a nation, walking humbly with

[10]See Deut. 10:12 and Ps. 51:16-17, both of which, though less beautiful, are very close to this passage.

God respects God's precepts, God's law, God's provisions for the way through which man may approach him, may communicate with him. A man walking humbly with God will not substitute his own provisions for God's provisions, his own will for God's will, his own interpretation of what is good for God's unaltering statement; he will not offer extravagant sacrifice without repentance or in place of repentance. He will know better than this, as David knew better. He will, if he has sinned with a high hand, surely make a blood sacrifice, because such sacrifice is Jehovah's provision for communication between the repenting man and him; but he will come to the sacrifice after repentance, his heart and mind humble.

God here shows Israel through Micah how man's obedience, his walking humbly, must perforce manifest itself. Whoever so walks lives with the humility that proves devotion through faith. Therefore he will do justice, as God has shown him, especially in relation to other men in social, political, and economic affairs; he will love mercy, exhibiting that quality of loving kindness which comes from Jehovah, and which love alone can lead him to exhibit. This remarkable verse (6:8) deals with the foundations of the only human character that can bring acceptable sacrifice to God.[11] The fruits of this character are the fruits of a repentant heart, and they are the prelude to any sacrifice man may bring to Jehovah; they will be clearly manifest in his attitude to God and to other men. He who walks humbly with God follows God's stipulations; and then, and then only,

---

[11]Cain could not bring acceptable sacrifice.

can he truly do justice, can he truly love kindness.

There had come in the Israel and Judah of Micah's day no repentance like the historic repentance of David; so Micah does not stress the final step of restoration, sacrifice, as David did. Yet, the plea of Micah's message is that God's people take advantage of God's goodness, that they eventually bring the divinely stipulated blood sacrifice to God for their sins with a high hand, but that they bring it humbly, in such true repentance that the way of salvation as delineated by David might be open to them as it had been to him.

In the beginning of his prophecy Micah set down briefly the fact of idolatry as the source of the people's sin, and he referred to that breach of the Covenant again in Section II; but overall he says comparatively little about the sins of idolatry, of hidden vice. What concerns him is the evidence in their maltreatment of the weak that Israel and Judah are entirely separated from Jehovah and his law.

What avails material sacrifice against constant, unrepented sin of oppression? There is, Micah cries, no religion in a process that makes the rich richer *because* the poor are poorer. And yet it should be noticed that Micah was no ranter. He did not wantonly array one class against another. His sympathies were with the poor, but he called the people, rich and poor, to God's accounting. In this interruption Micah sums up the practical fundamentals of religion for all; and in so doing he touches on the great messages of his fellows, Joel, Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah: Amos, for social justice; Joel and Hosea for loving mercy; Isaiah for reverent obedience

before Jehovah. Here, are his words; they are not surpassed for beauty and comprehension:

> He [Jehovah] hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require[12] of thee but[13]
> to do justly,
> and to love kindness [mercy]
> and to walk humbly with thy God?[14] (6:8)

THE SECOND QUESTION AND ANSWER

After this interruption Micah states that Jehovah now will answer the nation's question as to how to please him. This statement begins with a description of the way Jehovah answers: He cries to the city, to Jerusalem. Micah has never ceased to remind the nation of the sin of the policymakers in the capitals and other centers. The verb for *to cry* is to call, to announce, as a messenger of news. To this is added a comment on the way in which a man of wisdom[15] will receive God's awaited answer. If he be wise, in the answer he will see, or fear, Jehovah.

> The voice of Jehovah crieth unto the city; and the man of wisdom will see thy name: hear ye the rod[16] and who hath appointed it. (6:9)

Jehovah then answers the nation's questions, first by asking a question.[17] Here he queries practically and

---

[12]The verb here in the participle represents this requirement as perpetual, unchangeable.

[13]Literally: if not.

[14]the word for *humbly* is so used only once more in the Old Testament, Prov. 11:2. Its root meaning is "in secret": noiselessly, modestly.

[15]Read the coming of wisdom to a nation in Prov. 1:20 ff.

[16]The rod is the judgment, with reference perhaps to Assyria. Refer to Mic. 5:1 and Isa. 10:2, 24.

[17]One of Micah's favorite stylistic devices.

topically concerning social injustices, citing these as evidence that the nation cannot be pure as long as these exist, reminding of the *distress* such economic sin leaves in its wake. Then, he reminds the people of their basic sin, that of idolatry, typified here by the sins of the House of Omri of Israel.[18] This is appropriate because the granddaughter of Omri, Athaliah, had reigned queen of Judah, bringing the sins of Omri and of her parents, Ahab and Jezebel, to Judah with her; trying at last to extirpate the House of David, and with it of course, the strength Judah derived from the promise to David. The passage closes with the reminder that idolatry, as injustice, leaves in its wake national ruin, a ruin which the people will attribute to the leaders. Here is Jehovah's accusation:

> Are there yet treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked,[19] and a scant measure that is abominable?[20]
>
> Shall I [Judah, again a shift in person for emphasis] be pure with wicked balances, and with a bag of deceitful weights?[21]
>
> For the rich men thereof[22] are full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth. (6: 10-12)

This is the result of the sin of social injustice. The

---

[18]The story of the House of Omri: 1 Kings 16:21-33; 17:1; 18:17-20, 21:17, 22:6-40; 2 Chron. 18:1-34; 2 Kings 8:26, 11:1-16; 2 Chron. 22:2.

[19]Treasures gained lawlessly by the lawless.

[20]That is, perpetually, everywhere wrong. This question is affirmative.

[21]See Chapter II. This passage denotes treacherous deceits, deceitfulness overflowing the bag.

[22]This refers back to "the city," Jerusalem.

poor, the inhabitants, follow the pattern the economically successful have set. As they realize the injustice inflicted on them, they in turn practise it on others. Social psychologists of our own day point out that families living in sub-human houses, in disorganized neighborhoods, without facilities for cleanliness or wholesome recreation, without proper food, cannot be expected to guide the children to be law-abiding, honest, intelligent citizens. Who is, finally, before God, responsible for the gangs and the evil the gangs do in the slums? Who own the slums? And what do the owners do with their money? A good many preachers, tactful with their congregations, avoid this subject. But not Micah. Micah points out that there is judgment for a nation that shuts its eyes to such sin. Here, Jehovah continues to speak:

> Therefore I [another shift in the speaker, back to Jehovah] also have smitten thee with a grievous wound; I have made thee desolate because of thy sins.[23]
>
> Thou shalt eat, but not be satisfied;
> and thy humiliation shall be in the midst of thee:
> and thou shalt put away but shalt not save; and that which thou savest will I give up to the sword.[24]
>
> Thou shalt sow, but shalt not reap;
> thou shalt tread olives, but shalt not anoint thee with oil;

---

[23]This is God, active in history.

[24]These verbs in the Hebrew emphasize the inability of man to escape God's judgment. There is no safe place unless God so appoints it.

and the vintage, but shalt not drink wine.[25] (6:13-15)

This is the judgment for social injustice, and it stands too for religious apostasy; Jehovah is still speaking:

For the statutes of Omri are kept [one keeps for himself], and all the works of the house of Ahab, and ye walk [constantly] in their counsels: (6: 16)

With what final result, economically and religiously?

that I [Jehovah] may make thee a desolation, and the inhabitants thereof [Jerusalem] a hissing.[26] and ye shall bear the reproach of my people [my faithful]. (6:16)

In answer to this accusation, Micah gives to the people an honest confession of their sin and its consequences, a confession broken in thought and language showing great emotion. This is the sort of confession, the prophet seems to be saying to the nation, that must be made before there can be salvation and regained dominions. In the confession the people speak, sometimes one alone, sometimes together. Perhaps the first one is a farmer:

Woe is me![27] for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage: there is no cluster to eat; my soul desireth the first-ripe fig. The godly[28] man is perished out of the earth, and there is none upright

---

[25]Again Micah is quoting an older work, or is basing a passage on an older work that the people may recognize. The base passage is Deut. 28: 37-40. See also Joel 1:16-20; Hos. 8:7; 10:3; Hos. 9, especially verse 16; Isaiah 5:10; 17:10-11; Joshua 24:3.

[26]This judgment includes rich and poor, the whole people.

[27]This interjection indicates outbroken (howling) grief.

[28]The merciful man; the man governed by love and loyalty to Jehovah.

among men: they all lie in wait for blood; they hunt every man his brother with a net.[29] Their hands are upon that which is evil to do it diligently.[30] (7:1-3)

A second speaker interrupts, perhaps a citizen of Jerusalem:

The prince asketh [continuously], and his judge is ready [always in the attitude of receiving] for a reward; and the great man, he uttereth [continuously] the evil desire of his soul: thus they weave it [social injustice] together. (7:3)

A third adds his confession:

The best of them is as a brier; the most upright is worse than a thorn hedge. (7:4)

MICAH INTERRUPTS

These speakers Micah stops for a bit, interposing a reminder that the teaching, the warning of the true prophets is on the eve of fulfilment. He knows that this reminder of judgment will produce among the people perplexity, fear; and that it will also hasten the tempo of the dialogue with the feeling that ruin is quite near.

the day of thy watchman [true prophets], even thy visitation [the punishment foretold] is come; now shall be their [the people's] perplexity.[31] (7: 4)

THE ANSWER CONTINUES

A Head of a House of Jacob continues the confession. There is no more any honor, he mourns, not even among families; the old loyalties have faded before sin:

---

[29]These verbs in the imperfect indicate repetition, practice. They suggest the social evils of Section II, 3:2-3.

[30]"Upon the evil two hands to do it thoroughly."

[31]Isa. 22:5.

> Trust ye not in a neighbor; put ye not confidence in a friend; keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom. For the son dishonoreth the father,[32] the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house. (7:5, 6)

At this point Micah demonstrates that psychologically the prophet of judgment can be the prophet of comfort. He does it by this sequence of confession of sin and affirmation of faith, both spoken by the people themselves. The people, conscious now of sin, having confessed sin, in full realization of their guilt, accept judgment as part and parcel of their sin. This is true repentance. Notice another phase of their new humility: they trust Jehovah. They truly believe that he will deal with them fairly; will, as soon as he can, put them on their feet again, bring them from the darkness of prison, of captivity through sin, into light. They believe that the evil of those nations whose might Jehovah will use in judgment on Judah, Judah will in turn completely conquer. One of the remnant speaks, a woman it seems, and here begins the promise of final salvation:

> But as for me, I will look unto Jehovah; I will wait for the God of my salvation:[33] my God will hear me.
>
> Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy:[34] when

---

[32]Esteems him lightly, as if withered.

[33]Literally "But I in Jehovah will keep watch." The pronoun I is emphatic; "my salvation" signifies deliverance from bondage: "God from whom my salvation comes." Compare Josh. 24:15; 20-21. See also Isa. 17:10; Ps. 27:9.

[34]This can refer to the vengeful enemies of Section II, 4:11-12. The negative verbs express here not merely fact but exultation.

I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, Jehovah will be a light unto me.[35]

I will bear the indignation of Jehovah, because I have sinned against him, until he plead[36] my cause and execute judgment for me; he will bring me forth to the light, and I will behold his righteousness.

Then mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her[37] who said unto me, Where is Jehovah thy God?[38] Mine eyes shall see my desire upon her; now shall she be trodden down as the mire of the streets. (7: 7-10)

MICAH AGAIN

Micah speaks again, this time in great joy, sure of redemption; sure of the remnant, its preservation and function. He speaks to the nation, and his idea seemingly turns between the literal and the spiritual, between Jehovah's restored land and the spiritual kingdom of Section II. He promises expansion, world-wide influence. In an interesting grammatical construction he describes the gathering of the nations to Jehovah by using a singular verb with a collective idea, indicating the joining of many people moved by a common impulse. In addition, he uses a double preposition meaning "to-from," thus suggesting that people will come to the places he names as the boundaries of his world from other places beyond them, and that then all will come together to Jehovah.

---

[35]Isa. 9:1-2; 42:7; Ps. 107:10.

[36]Notice that this is still the lawsuit.

[37]Literally: "She will hide in shame, covering herself with a garment."

[38]This may refer to Assyria: 2 Chron. 32:11-15. Refer also to Mic. 4:11-12.

There is much national feeling, much patriotism, in the remainder of Micah's prophecy, but is all tinged with a profound spiritual conception.

> A day for building thy walls![39] in that day shall the decree [the judgment] be far removed.
>
> In that day shall they come unto thee from Assyria and the cities of Egypt, and from Egypt even to the River, and from sea to sea, and from mountain to mountain. (7:11, 12)

Then, once more, Micah reminds the people that before all this is attained there must be sorrow; the land must bear the sin of the people, the fruit of desolation. Future repentance cannot supplant the present fruit of prevailing sin:

> Yet shall the land be desolate, because of them that dwell therein, for the fruit of their doings. (7:13)

THE PEOPLE PRAY

The people answer Micah's glad promise and his sorrowful reminder with a prayer to their God:

> Feed thy people with [in] thy rod,[40] the flock of thy heritage which dwell solitarily in the midst of Carmel;[41] let them feed in Bashan and Gilead[42] as in the days of old. (7:14)

---

[39]This word describes the walls of a vineyard, not a city.

[40]Compare with Ps. 23.

[41]A range of hills eight miles long, wooded, affording poor pasturage. This seems to mean, however, a desert place in a garden (Carmel).

[42]Bashan was in Manasseh, a fine grazing land. See Deut. 32:14. Gilead, also east of the Jordan, was watered by fine perennial streams.

THE LAWSUIT ENDS WITH JEHOVAH'S REPLY

Jehovah replies, and the mercy of his answer marks the end of the controversy. The historic import of the answer ties in with that of the first accusing question:

> As in the days of thy coming forth out of the land of Egypt will I show unto them [the enemies of God's people] marvelous things.[43]

THE REST IS REJOICING

The people then give themselves to rejoicing over the humbling of their enemies, not before them, but before their God:

> The nations shall see and shall be ashamed of their might;[44]
> they shall lay their hand upon their mouth;[45]
> their ears shall be deaf.[46]
> They shall lick the dust like a serpent;
> like crawling things of the earth they shall come trembling out of their close places;[47]
> They shall come with fear unto Jehovah our God, and shall be afraid because of thee. (7: 16-17)

From this nationalistic but spiritual rejoicing, the people now turn to praise of Jehovah. They see the na-

---

[43]Acts of grace.

[44]It is so extensive and avails so little.

[45]See Job 21:5f: Laying the hand on the mouth was a gesture symbolic of reverent silence.

[46]Deaf from Jehovah's thunders figuratively; astounded before his "marvelous things."

[47]These two expressions mean *humbly*. They are found in older Hebrew literature: Gen. 3:14; Isa. 49:23; Ps. 18:45; 72:9; Deut. 32:24; Hos. 3:5.

tion redeemed after repentance, shepherded by Jehovah; and they see their enemies subdued before their God. This song is really a Doxology, cast exquisitely in three almost equal parts, and it sets out Micah's doctrine of God. Jehovah, holy, separate; Jehovah, whose holiness makes judgment of sin necessary; Jehovah, who loves man and in his love forgives him, finds a way to redeem him, a way to keep his promises to him. Indirectly, the song sums up, too, what Micah has taught about man: sinful in his nature but capable of the holiness Jehovah has set as a goal for him; helpless in his sin except as he truly desires to turn from it, as he repents of it; aided by Jehovah at once and sufficiently on repentance; sustained by Jehovah in spiritual power and righteousness, in justice, in intelligent morality, forever. All of this is in the song the people sing to Jehovah, praising his forgiving love, his redeeming power, his perpetual faithfulness; and it is Micah's last, sure word to Judah and to Israel:

> Who is a God like unto thee[48] that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth over the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighteth in lovingkindness.
>
> He will again have compassion upon us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot; and thou[49] will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.
>
> Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the lovingkindness to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old. (7:18-20)

---

[48]Some older critics considered this phrase Micah's signature. Micah means "Who is like Jah (iah, Jehovah).

[49]Notice this typical shift in person. Compare the whole passage with Deut. 34:6-7; and with Ps. 103, especially verse 9.

APPENDIX A

THE MOABITE STONE

King Mesha of Moab (2 Kings 3:4-5) erected a monument at Didon to commemorate his revolt from Israel under Jehoram, and his conquest of that nation's territory and people. This is the king who sacrificed his son on the wall of Kirhareseth (2 Kings 3:25-27) for the safety of the city.

The monument, three feet ten inches high, two feet broad, is of black basalt, and has a semicircular top. It was found in 1868 by V. Klein, a German. During negotiations for the purchase of it from the Arabs, a Frenchman, Clermont-Ganneau sent experts to take a squeeze of it and to try to buy it for the French. During this time the Arabs broke the stone and took the pieces as charms. Clermont-Ganneau, however, recovered the most of these, and with the help of the squeeze reconstructed the greater part of the inscription.

The reconstructed stone is now in the Louvre. The most definitive edition of the text was made by Smend and Socin in 1886. This text, with some corrections, was translated by Dr. Neubauer, and was used as the basis of an article in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia,* Vol. III., p. 2072, by A. H. Sayce. That text is quoted here.

Notice especially the relation between Mesha and Chemosh, and compare it with the account of David and Jehovah in 2 Sam. 2. Notice also Mesha's building program, the destiny of captive Israelites, and the language of the monument. Worth noting also is the possibility

that among Moabites, as among Israelites, was no national goddess. The feminine Ashtoreth is deprived of the feminine suffix and identified with Chemosh in the name Ashtar-Chemosh. The alphabet of the inscription is early Phoenician.

"I am Mesha, son of Chemosh-Melech, King of Moab, the Dibonite. My father reigned over Moab 30 years and I reigned after my father. I have made this monument for Chemosh at Qorhah, a monument of salvation, for he saved me from all invaders, and let me see my desire upon my enemies. Omri was king of Israel, and he oppressed Moab many days, for Chemosh was angry with his land. His son [Ahab] followed him and he also said: I will oppress Moab. In my days [Chemosh] said: I will see my desire on him and his house, and Israel surely shall perish forever. Omri took the land of Medeba,[1] and dwelt in it during his days and half the days of his son, altogether 40 years. But Chemosh gave it back in my days. I built Baal-Neon[2] and made therein the ditches;[3] I built Kirjathaim.[4] The men of Gad dwelt in the land of Ataroth[5] from of old, and the King of Israel built there Ataroth; but I made war against the city and took it. And I slew all the city, for the pleasure of Chemosh and of Moab, and I brought back from them the Arel[6] of Dodah[7] and bore him before Chemosh in Qerioth.[8] And I placed therein the men of Sharon and the men of Mehereth. And Chemosh said unto me: Go, seize Nebo of Israel and I went in the night and fought against it from the break of dawn till noon; and I took it, slew all of them, 7,000 men and [boys?], women and [girls?] and female slaves, for to Ashtar—Chemosh I devoted them. And I took from thence the Arels of Yahwheh and bore them before Chemosh. Now the King of Israel had built Jahaz,[9] and he dwelt in it while he waged war against me, but Chemosh drove him out from before me. And I took from Moab 200 men, all chiefs, and transported them to Jahez,

---

[1]Num. 21:30.
[2]Josh. 13:17.
[3]The wells.
[4]Num. 32:37.
[5]Num. 32:3.
[6]Champion.
[7]Apparently a female deity found by the side of the image representing Jehovah; the name has the same root as David.
[8]Jer. 48:24.
[9]Isa. 15:4.

which I took to add to Dibon. I built Qorhah, the Wall of the Forests, and the Wall of the Ophel,[10] and I built its gates and I built its towers. And I built the House of Moloch, and I made sluices for the water-ditches in the midst of the city. And there was no cistern within the city of Qorhah and I said to all the people: Make for yourselves every man a cistern in his house. And I dug the canals for Qorhah by means of the prisoners from Israel. I built Aroer and I made the road in Arnon.[11] And I built Beth-Bamoth[12] for it was destroyed. I built Bezer[13] for in ruins [it was] [And all of the chiefs?] of Dibon were 50, for all Dibon is loyal, and I placed 100 in the cities which I added to the land. I built [Beth]—Mede[b]a,[14] and Beth-Diblathaim,[15] and Beth-Baal-Neon[16] and transported the shepherds [?] . . . [with] the flock[s] of the land. Now in Horonaim[17] there dwelt [the children?] . . . [and] Chemosh said unto me: Go down, make war upon Horonaim. So I went down [and] made war upon the city, and took it, [and] Chemosh dwelt in it during my days. And I went up [?] from thence; I made . . . . And I . . . ."

There is one important respect in which the translation by G. A. Cooke differs from the one given here. Instead of "Omri took the land of Medeba, and dwelt in it during his days and half the days of his son, altogether 40 years," Dr. Cooke translates as follows: "And Omri took possession of the [lan]d of Mehedeba; and he dwelt in it, his days and half his sons' days, forty years."[18] There is equal warrant for Cooke's translations, and it is to be preferred in view of the fact that it agrees better with Biblical chronological data.

---

[10]The only other known Ophels were by Jerusalem and Samaria. See 2 Chron. 27:3 for reference to Jotham's extension of the Wall of Ophel; also 2 Chron. 33:14. The Samarian Ophel (2 Kings 5:24) is translated "hill." It must have been a fortified place.

[11]Deut. 2:36.

[12]Num. 26:19.

[13]Deut. 4:43.

[14]Num. 21:36.

[15]Jer. 48:22.

[16]Jer. 48:23.

[17]Isa. 15:5.

[18]G. A. Cooke, *A textbook of North-Semitic Inscriptions, Moabite, Hebrew, Phoenician, Aramaic, Nabataean, Palmyrene, Jewish,* Oxford, 1903.

APPENDIX B

NEHUSHTAN, THE SERPENT

Critics differ as to whether the translation of Nehushtan in 2 Kings 18:4 should be Brazen or simply Serpent. The word is a proper noun, not generic, and can derive from either Nāhāsh (serpent) or N^{e}hosheth (brass).

The story of the origin of the serpent Hezekiah destroyed is found, of course, in Numbers 21. For grumbling against him, Jehovah sent among the Israelites, on their way to Canaan, fiery serpents, which bit the people so that many died. Others repented and confessed their sin; Moses prayed on their behalf to Jehovah. "And Jehovah said unto Moses, make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a standard: and . . . everyone that is bitten, when he seeth it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and set it upon the standard."

That brazen serpent journeyed with Israel into Canaan, and the people evidently held it in such reverence that Hezekiah's destruction of it became necessary. Its sanctuary, the place where "they burned incense to it," may have been near Jerusalem, the place where Adonijah sacrificed "by the stone of Zoheleth" (serpent), near the well En-rogel (1 Kings 1:9). This shrine seems to have been dedicated to Jehovah.

Serpents, though few in Palestine and not all the species poisonous, are frequently mentioned in the Bible; and all the references except the very first in Genesis and that in Isa. 34:15 indicate poisonous qualities. The characterization and the activity of the serpent in Eden, however, point to a primitive conception of an animal different

from the beasts of the field, apart from them, probably winged or footed, thinking, speaking, friendly with man, respected by him, subtle, wise. This creature attempted to turn man from God, and was degraded to crawling, to eating dust, to being man's enemy.

Biblical references to the serpent are invariably to an enemy. Nāhāsh, the generic word in Hebrew, comes from the verb meaning "to hiss"; and the regard in which the people held the animal is indicated by such descriptions as these: Dan is a wise but dangerous tribe, like a serpent in the way (Gen. 49:17); a sinner's iniquities "hatch adder's eggs" (Isa. 59:5); the wicked have poison like the poison of the serpent, and are like the deaf adder (Ps. 59:4); the wise man cannot understand the serpent's strange movement, its "way . . . on a rock" Prov. 30:18-19).

There are Biblical indications of Hebraic knowledge of legendary serpents. Isaiah (14:29 and 30:6) mentions a "fiery flying serpent," and (27:1) "leviathan, the crooked serpent." Amos (9:3) threatens with a serpent at the bottom of the sea; and the serpent of Aaron's rod (Ex. 7:9-12) was called "tannin," a sea-dragon, though that of Moses's rod (Ex. 4:3, 7:15) was called simply Nāhāsh. In Job 3:8 the leviathan seems held responsible for the eclipse of the sun, probably in the legend the serpent's coils hiding the sun.

More factual are the descriptions of Numbers 21, where the "fiery" seems to suggest the appearance; of Deuteronomy 32:24, where the "fiery" seems to describe the bite; of Isaiah 27:1 and of Job 26:13, where the swiftness of its movement is noted. Micah refers to the "close places" in which it lives, its crawling and licking the dust.

In every primitive religion is some form of a cult of the serpent. People are fascinated by its form, movement, markings, its ability to shed its skin and renew its beauty, its habitat in the earth from which it can emerge, its

power to charm, its swift and deadly attack. Perhaps the best known cult is that of the Ophites, a second century gnostic sect that worshiped the serpent as Christ, or King of Heaven, and kept a snake to encircle the bread of the sacrament. Even today, among the Indians of our country serpent worship is found, especially in the rain festivals, and that this cult has existed pre-historically is evidenced by artifacts showing serpents: horned, winged, multiheaded, coiled into baskets, even figured in the mounds that make the great Dracontia of the Ohio Valley. The Dahomy Cult on the Slave Coast of Africa worships the giant python, every living one of the species being held in reverence and extreme awe. In its sanctuary are initiated priests, who know poisons and antidotes, women who are "possessed" by the god and serve as religious prostitutes during the season when the crops germinate, and their children, who are called "Children of Whydah" (God). To the Great Python until fairly recently the devotees offered occasional human sacrifices.

Among early Semitic and Hamitic peoples the serpent was clearly held in reverence. This fact is shown by the figured use of the serpent in places of worship, on doors, on pillars, even at the corners of an altar. It seems that at first, as with the serpent in Genesis, the animal was considered a friend, a benefactor, possibly a guardian; possibly in the very earliest conception, because it lives underground and emerges from its home at will or because it sheds its skin and so renews its beauty, a guardian of vegetation, life. To illustrate, on a coin found in Tyre were pictured two sacred pillars with a tree between, and around the tree a snake. In Greek mythology, Athena made a serpent guardian of the sacred olive tree. This brings to mind the dragon (serpent) that guarded the tree on which grew the golden apples in the Garden of Hesperides, the dragon that guarded the Golden Fleece that hung on a tree, an idea which is in contrast with that

of the serpent in the Garden of Eden, the serpent there urging on Eve the spoilation of the tree.

Connected with this idea of protection to life, is the serpent's connection with the art of healing. Serpents were sacred to the Phoenician god of healing, Esmun, and the Greek Æsculapius carried a staff with serpents wrapped around it, a symbol used even today by physicians. Æsculapius is frequently pictured with serpents, a yellow (brazen?) serpent was sacred to him, and numerous legends stem from the one that in the form of a serpent he came to Sicyon, where snakes were fed in his honor. In Polynesian legend today the messengers of the god of healing are serpents. Somehow from this connection, or perhaps from a homopathic idea similar to that of 1 Samuel 6:5, grew the doctrine that another serpent, or the image of one, could heal a serpent-inflicted wound. This led to the making of serpent images for the purposes of healing. One such, a bronze cobra, was found in the excavations at Gezer; and Nehushtan seems to have become, for his devotees, a god of this cult, the healing serpent.

A part of the conception of the serpent as a guardian were its characteristics of power and swiftness. Remember the Polynesian snake-messengers, and the snake-wound staff of Apollo, messenger of the gods, himself a physician, father of Æsculapius. Egyptians seem to have had very little serpent worship, but their monarchs wore golden serpents and discs on their head-dresses and other ornaments, as a symbol of royal wisdom and power. Their Kneph was a hawk-headed serpent, and they pictured a four footed serpent with wings. This powerful, wise, swift serpent may have originated in cosmic conceptions from the area around Syria. A great sea serpent (the Leviathan?) on which the earth rested once burrowed into the earth and formed the Syrian river Orontes. It moved and caused earthquakes; it hid the sun in the coils of its body. In Persia the rainbow was the serpent's path; among the Indians of our country the Milky Way

is its path. A serpent with its tail in its mouth, representing the endlessness of time, appears in ancient art across the world, in such apparently unrelated nations as Egypt, India, Mexico, China.

Certain mysterious ideas adhered, too, to the serpent. Because of its habitat, it was often regarded as embodying the souls of the dead. As among the Dahomies today, some ancients seem to have regarded the serpent as a god. One portrayal from Greece inscribed "To Zeus Meilichios" shows a bearded snake; and another pictures Zeus as a man enthroned, with a snake beneath the throne, and the sacrifice of a pig (unacceptable, it is remembered, to Jehovah) before him. There are, too, portrayals of women in the embrace of a serpent or of several serpents; and one story of the parentage of Alexander the Great is that he was the son of a god-serpent, that came with a healing root in his mouth to cure Pompey, and the wife of Philip of Macedon (Plutarch, Life of Alexander, II). A Phrygian race, the Ophiogenae, claimed descent from a serpent, as do various African tribes beside the Dahomy, and as the totems of certain American Indians, notably the Hurons and the Natchez, indicate that they did. In Mexican legend the husband of the first woman was a great snake. Comparatively, Eve's relationship with the Serpent was innocent, though the results are more far-reaching and dire.

Later, possibly growing from the ideas of power and swiftness, and from the similarity of form between a moving snake and streak lightning, the serpent became linked in the minds of primitive peoples with lightning; and its attitude to man began to be accepted as hostile. This change, from friendship to enmity, comes in nearly all cults. The serpent, no longer the guardian of vegetation, must be propitiated because it may withhold rain, or may send too much (a waterspout, a cyclone, "looks like" a serpent), or it may plot, as did the serpent in Eden, against man's welfare, deceive him, fatally hurt him,

or bring him to immutable ruin. To this end, grew legendary champions who freed a people of the menace of serpents or dragons: Phorbas, who freed Rhodes; Cychreus, who slew the dragon of Salamis; St. George; Beowulf; St. Patrick.

Now Biblical material dealing with the serpent contains nearly all of these conceptions: the cosmic serpent of the sea and the eclipse; the friendly serpent that through its friendship with Eve treacherously led her into sinful action involving the fruit on the tree that grew in the middle of the garden of Eden; the brazen healing-serpent of the wilderness; the brazen god-serpent to which incense was burned, probably in a sanctuary dedicated to Jehovah; the feeling the people had that the serpent was an enemy, chthonic, mysterious, dangerous, treacherous, poisonous, subtle; and Hezekiah's attempt, through his destruction of Nehushtan, to free the people from the evil attendant on their attitude to that image, in order that their attitude to Jehovah might become spiritually right.

* * *

The best studies on the serpent are: J. Fergusson, *Tree and Serpent Worship,* London, 1869, and W. Sharpe, *Humanity and the Serpent of Genesis,* Boston, 1886. Both of these are, however, out of print. Excellent available summaries on serpent worship are by George W. Gilmore, "Serpent," *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge,* Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Vol. 10, p. 363; and by J. A. MacCulloch, "Serpent Worship," *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics,* edited by James Hastings, Scribners, New York, Vol. II, p. 399. An account of the Dahomey cult is in J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough,* Third Edition, Macmillan, New York, 1935, Vol. 5, p. 65 ff. His *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament,* London, 1918, also has interesting material on the Serpent of the Bible.

APPENDIX C

OUTLINES OF THE PROPHECY OF MICAH

Three outlines of the prophecy are given here. The first is the one used in this study. The second is equally logical, though it does not take into consideration the three parallel openings and the three parallel closings of climactic promise. The third, by Paul Kleinert, is interesting in its consideration of Jacob's guilt, penalty, and salvation, objectively and evangelically.

A

I. Superscription—1: 1

II. First Section: Sin and Judgment, Chapters 1 and 2
Accusation—1:2-5; Judgment—1:6-7
The Interruption: Mourning—1:8-16
Accusation—2:1-2; Judgment—2:3-11
The Interruption: Protest and Answer—2:6-11
The Promise—2:12-13

III. Second Section: From Sin to Salvation: A Study in Leadership, Chapters 3-5
Accusation and Judgment against Rulers—3:1-4
Accusation and Judgment against False Prophets—3: 5-7
Interruption by Micah—3:8
Accusation and Judgment, Summary—3:9-12
Promise—4:1 - 5:15

IV. Third Section: Sin, Repentance, Salvation, Chapters 6 - 7

Accusation—6:1-12
Judgment—6:13 - 7:6
Promise Ending in Praise—7:7-20

B

I. Superscription—1:1

II. Approaching Judgment on Israel and Judah because of Persistent Sin—1:2 - 3:12
- A. Sins of the Capitals Representative of the Countries—1:2-16
- B. Judgment upon Land Barons—2:1-5
- C. False Preaching by Lying Prophets—2:6-13
- D. Denunciation of Leaders—Ch. 3

III. Vision of Hope—Chapters 4 - 5
- A. Final Triumph of Jerusalem—Ch. 4
- B. Coming Leader from Bethlehem to Restore the Remnant of Jacob—Ch. 5

IV. Lawsuit of Jehovah—Chapters 6 - 7
- A. First Complaint of Jehovah—6:1-5
- B. Israel's First Reply—6:6-8
- C. Second Complaint of Jehovah—6:9-16
- D. Israel's Reply: A Confession—7:1-10
- E. Promised Blessing for Israel Following Judgment —7:11-13
- F. Final Plea for Israel, Gathered from Many Lands —7:14-17
- G. Doxology: The Triumph of Grace—7:18-20

C

I. The First Division: The Prophetico - political — Chapters 1 - 5
- A. The First Discourse: External Guilt, Samaria and Judah—Chapter 1
- B. The Second Discourse: External Judgment: Judgment on Jerusalem—2:1 - 3:12

C. Third Discourse: Salvation, The Messiah—Chapters 4 and 5

II. The Second Division: The Ideal Contemplative — Chapters 6 and 7

Jacob's Guilt, Penalty, and Salvation Considered Evangelically

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Colbern, Camden M., "Images," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia,* ed. by James Orr, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, 1949, Vol. 3.
2. Elmslie, Wm. Alexander Leslie, "Prophet," *The Encyclopedia Britannica,* 1941, Vol. 18.
3. Frazer, Sir James G., *The Golden Bough,* abridged edition, Macmillan, New York, 1940.
4. Frazer, Sir James G., *The Golden Bough,* unabridged edition, Macmillan, New York, 1935.
5. Gilmore, G. W., "Edom," *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge,* ed. by Samuel Macauley Jackson, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1950, Volume 4.
6. Josephus, Flavius, "Antiquities of the Jews" and "In Answer to Apion," *The Works of Flavius Josephus,* American Book Exchange, New York, 1880, Vol. 1.
7. Keil, C. F. and Delitzsch, F., *The Twelve Minor Prophets,* Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, 1949.
8. Kennett, R. H., "Moab," *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics,* ed. by James Hastings, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1928, Vol. 6.
9. Kleinert, Paul, "The Book of Micah Expounded," *Commentary on the Minor Prophets,* ed. by J. P. Lange, Scribner, Armstrong, and Co., New York, 1874.
10. Macalister, R. A. S., "Human Sacrifice," *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics,* ed. by James Hastings, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1928, Vol. 6.
11. Macalister, R. A. S., *Century of Excavation in Palestine,* Oxford, London, 1910.
12. Macalister, R. A. S., *Philistines, Their History and Civilization,* The British Academy, Schweich Lectures, 1911, Oxford Univ., 1914.

13. Macalister, R. A. S., *Excavation of Gezer,* Oxford University Press, London, 1912.
14. McGlothlin, Wm. Joseph, "Human Sacrifice," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia,* Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1949, Vol. 4.
15. Olmstead, A. T., *History of Palestine and Syria to the Macedonian Conquest,* Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1939.
16. Orelli, C. von, "Prophecy," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia,* Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1949, Vol. 4.
17. Orelli, C. von, *The Twelve Minor Prophets,* T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1897.
18. Pusey, E. B., *The Minor Prophets,* Baker Book House, 1950, Vol. 2.
19. Reeve, J. J., "Sacrifice," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia,* Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1949, Vol. 4.
20. Sampey, John R., *Syllabus for Old Testament Study,* Broadman Press, Nashville.
21. Smith, George Adam, *The Book of the Twelve Prophets,* Hodder and Stoughton, George H. Doran Co., New York, Vol. 1.
22. Thomson, W. M., *The Land and the Book,* new edition, Thos. Nelson and Sons, New York, 1910.

INDEX

Bethlehem: 41, 82, 85, 94, 118, 128.

Heathen Worship: in Canaan, Judah, Israel, 23, 46, 48 57, 61, 65, 97f; The Baalim and Asherim, 23, 30, 50, 57, 59, 85, 89.

Heathen Nations: Egypt, 27, 56, 135, 143, 144; *Assyria,* 33, 39f, 47, 51f, 55f, 80f, 97, 102, 128, 131, 143; *Ammon,* 44, 45, 67; *Syria,* 45f, 47, 55, 98; *Babylon,* 51f, 57, 80f, 88f, 118, 123, 131; *Philistia,* 47, 51, 59; *Edom,* 47.

Idolatry: 36, 45, 46, 47, 50, 57, 59, 65, 85, 96f, 137, 142; heathen gods, 16, 17, 23, 30, 44, 52, 57, 58, 65, 66, 82, 120, 130, 131, Appendices A and B.

Immanuel, Messiah, of Davidic line, Shepherd, This man our Peace: 45, 55, 114, 118ff, 124, 128, 129f; his pre-existence, 128f.

Israel, the people: 26f; covenant with, 27, 35, 37, 58, 82; mission and moral responsibility, 38; covenant broken and results, 28, 39f, 85, 87, 98, 136, 137f; ultimate triumph, 40, 85ff, 108f, 129f, 147, 149.

Jehovah: respect for abroad, 15, 34f; prophetic conception of, 35, 150; worship of pure, 35; and Israel, 38, 40; requirements by, 76; and sacrifice, 62, 136f, 159; his divine services, 135; his promises, 76, 122; his triumph, 40, 118ff.

Kings: Under the law, 29; *Saul,* 18, 19, 28, 82; *David,* 20f, 28f, 40, 49, 53, 58, 82, 85, 99, 124, 128, 136, 139, 140, 142; *Solomon,* 28, 43, 47, 76, 122. Judah: *Ahaz,* 20, 23, 31, 46ff, 51, 64, 67; *Hezekiah,* 19, 35, 48ff, 55, 57, 76, 87, 93,

94, 102, 116, 135, Appendix B. Israel: *Ahab,* 23, 29, 30, 31, 64, 82, 113, 144; and Jezebel, 23, 30f, 142; and Athaliah, 32, 142; and Naboth, 29, 31, 68; *Jeroboam I,* 28, 29, 30, 57; *Jeroboam II,* 33, 54; *Omri,* 82, 97, 142, 144. Foreign: *Mesha of Moab,* 31, 60, 61, 64, 65, 120, Appendix A; Syria, 31, 45, 55, 98; Assyria, 47, 51ff, 56, 57, 97, 102; Babylon, 82, 131; Egypt, 56.

Latter days: 120-1.

Mosaic laws: 18, 29, 45, 47, 59f, 60ff, 66, 70f, 72f, 75; knowledge of, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 66.

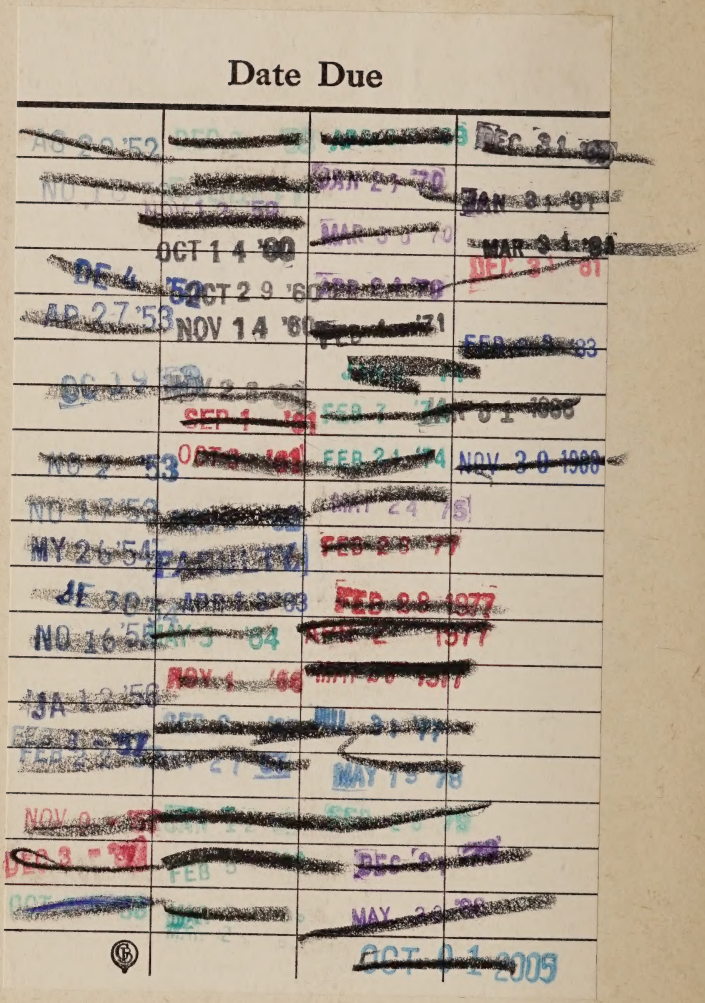
Mountain of the Lord's house: 119f.

Nehushtan, the Serpent: 50, Appendix B.

Prophets: Function, 13; methods, 20f; among Israelites, 20; transcendental powers, 17; responsibility, 19; tradition, 25ff; twofold ministry, 26; bonds of, 21, 27; schools of, sons of, 28, 35; first teachings, 35; change in, 35f; use of contemporary history, 36ff.
False and unworthy: 17-18; character of, 22f; heathen, 23; danger of, 24; Balaam, 14ff, 20, 21, 22, 23, 120; test for, 24.
True: *Abraham,* 26f, 37, 40, 58, 89, 150, and Isaac, 64f, 120. *Ahijah,* 28. *Amittai,* 33. *Amos,* 21, 24, 33, 35, 37, 44, 76, 81, 85, 87, 109, 114, 140. *Asaph,* 49. *Daniel,* 20. *David,* 28, 90. *Elijah,* 17, 23, 28, 29f, 35, 37. *Elisha,* 30f, 35, 37, 98. *Enoch,* 25. *Gad,* 19, 28. *Hanani,* 28. *Hosea,* 16, 21, 22, 24, 35, 37, 40, 45, 56, 57, 59, 65, 73, 77, 81, 82, 86, 87, 88, 98, 109, 140. *Isaiah,* 21, 22, 24, 35, 40, 41, 44, 47, 51, 52, 53, 55, 77, 81, 82, 85, 87, 88, 89, 109, 119, 140. *Jacob,* 20, 26, 27, 40, 58, 90, 150. *Jehu,* 29. *Jeremiah,* 93. *Joel,* 21, 32f, 34, 76, 81, 109, 119, 140. *Jonah,* 20, 33ff. *Joshua,* 16, 20, 24, 27, 67. *Micah the Morashtite,* 13, 16, 19, 21, 22, 23, 79, 90ff; unworthy prophets, 24f, 35, 86, 105ff, 113f; social and economic teachings, 39, 40, 42, 44, 47, 52, 54, 57, 58, 66, 75ff, 84ff, 102ff, 140f, 142ff; form

of his prophecy, 80-84, Appendix C; style, use of history, 81f; attitude to his calling, 93, 115; place among Hebrews, 93f; his teachings about: the spiritual kingdom and the ruler, 85ff, 89, 111, 118ff, 128f, 147; religion, 87, 138, 140; the remnant, 89, 108f, 129f, 147, 150; the covenant people, 95ff, 107, 116, 127, 131; the basic sin, 96, 140, 142, 144; leadership, Ch. V, 135; sacrifice, 135ff; Jehovah, 150; man's nature, 150; his accusations, 83, 96f, 102ff, 112f, 134f; his judgments, 83, 97ff, 104f, 114f, 117f, 144ff, 147; his climactic promises, 83, 108ff, 118ff, 147, 149f. *Micaiah,* 19, 82. *Moses,* 15, 16, 20, 24, 26, 27, 37, 58, 68, 120, 135. *Nathan,* 19, 28. *Noah,* 26. *Oded,* 46. *Samuel,* 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 26, 27, 28. *Zechariah,* 44. *Zadok,* 28.

Sacrifice: 28, 49, 60, 136ff; human, 18, 31, 46, 57, 60ff, 85, 137.


Date Due
OCT 14 '60
NOV 14 '60
DEC 31 '91
MAR 31 '91
NOV 30 1988
NOV 30 1988
OCT 01 2005

p 35

proph = judg for sin
① moral life (indi)
② nation's pol. life
= mercy for repentance
Hosea — mercy stems from LOVE

BS1615 .C781
A study of the Prophet Micah; power by
Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library
1 1012 00117 5902